

# ***The New Dialogue with the Spirit of the Earth***

The Seasons and Seasonal Festivals in the Southern Hemisphere

**Geert Suwelack**

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## PREFACE

The attached essay 'The New Dialogue with the Spirit of the Earth' by Geert Suwelack first appeared in English translation from the German in 1985. It deals with the question of the seasons and festivals, from an Anthroposophical perspective. Although the celebration of festivals in the southern hemisphere is a focus, the essay is of relevance to Anthroposophists living in both hemispheres in that it shows clearly how the seasonal breathing of the Earth underpins the esoteric Christian festivals.

There is a view that a fundamental requirement for the celebration of the Christmas festival is that the human soul be immersed in the cold and darkness of mid-winter. But, that only applies to those who live in the northern hemisphere - in the south this festival should be celebrated in mid-summer.

One could call that the traditional 'global festivals' position. It resonates rather poorly with Rudolf Steiner's indications on the question of the seasons and the festivals.

In the quotation by Steiner: "When we observe St John's Day - the time when we could accompany the earth-soul soaring upward to unite itself with the stars - the Antipodes celebrate Christmas. Thus, in that part of the world, the earth-soul retires into the earth." some have said that Steiner actually meant to say winter instead of Christmas as Rudolf Steiner was not a stickler for words.

I believe that the best answer to that obviously shaky position is to place a concise, clear presentation of the indications given by Steiner before the readers, and allow them to come to their own conclusions. Such a presentation is to be found in this gem of an essay by Geert Suwelack, who was a priest of the Christian Community, and wrote his essay while living in Sao Paolo, Brazil.

Phil Bromley

## INTRODUCTION

Some time ago there was correspondence with the Vorstand enquiring about Rudolf Steiner's lectures on matters relating to the Seasons and Festivals in lands south of the equator.

A reply spoke of : "Awaiting a general maturing of mankind", and wondered if, "the moment is ripening for the seasons and festivals question to be faced squarely with all its implications for the southern hemisphere."

Then a suggestion was made to their correspondent to produce in translation, a certain book described as follows: "There is no better collection and analysis of facts and utterances by Rudolf Steiner than in the book produced a few years ago, in Sao Paulo by Geert Suwelack, 'The New Dialogue with the Spirit of the Earth'." And here with his hearty agreement, is the English translation of the book.

Very many hours of devoted work have occupied a number of people here in New Zealand, all of whom recognise the need for a deeper understanding of this facet of Spiritual Science, which was offered to humanity in both hemispheres of our earth by Rudolf Steiner.

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Anthroposophy or Spiritual Science was the gift of Rudolf Steiner to earthly humanity. He was able to bring down the advanced spiritual truths of the Michael School that was conducted in spirit realms.

The study of Anthroposophy leads one to follow man's earthly development from the Atlantean into the First Post-Atlantean Epoch, where the civilising periods moved from India on a westward course along the Temperate Zone, to the Atlantic Ocean.

This limited area was regarded as 'the world' during 9000 years, until after the beginning of the Age of Consciousness Soul in 1413. Then men explored and discovered that their 'world' was in fact a small part of a complete globe.

By the time that Steiner gave Spiritual Science to the world, there was a flow of northern peoples settling in lands south of the equator and he therefore gave many truths regarding the southern hemisphere and its opposite conditions from those of the north during the world-calendar, with its reversed times and seasons. He pointed out that Ancient man had celebrated nature's seasons, and that by again celebrating nature's seasons, humanity will then find harmony with the world of spirit, with the Archangels of each season and with Christ, whose Impulse moves with the changing seasons of the

year. Thus, Steiner showed that southern humanity must needs adjust to their new conditions, which lose all associations with celebrations and traditions of northern countries.

The time of the Thirteen Holy Nights is an important period of deep meaning for mankind. There is at this time a special closeness to Christ. In winter when the sun has passed its solstice, all plant life sinks into the soil and there learns from the Earth the secrets of the planets.

Steiner explained in the Hanover lecture of 26/12/1911, 'The Birth of the Sun Spirit as the Spirit of the Earth, the Thirteen Holy Nights' (The Festivals and their Meaning), that the Sun gives each hemisphere its winter, when the plants are dead above the Earth but are sharing the Earth's life below, and "just as the force contained in the seed of every plant is bound up with the physical forces of the Earth, so is the inmost being of the human soul bound up with the spiritual forces of the Earth. .... What the soul undergoes in these spirit-depths of the Earth is entirely hidden from the ordinary consciousness."

Far from the ecclesiastical understanding of the Christ, as awakened by priestly church rites, Rudolf Steiner gave advanced spiritual truths, leading one to the grandeur of the spirit beings interworking with Cosmos and Earth, while here beside us is where the Saviour, Christ, works in the Earth's etheric breathing process. True feeling for Spiritual Science leads the soul to know that life on Earth is also life in unison with the stars. While rightly living our life here, it becomes the daily celebration of a sacrament, which consecrates humanity, Earth, cosmos and the world of spirit. In the following sentence Geert Suwelack indicates something of what his studies into this facet of Spiritual Science has revealed to him: "One may immediately feel, if one makes that which has been described here one's own, how huge the step is, which has been made through the Science of the Spirit, from a traditional, ecclesiastical understanding of the Christ, to such a cosmic panorama."

Norman Ogilvie  
Auckland, New Zealand  
July 1985

## CHRIST AND THE EARTH

The descent of the Christ Sun Spirit to the Earth can be envisaged as a reversed dying of the human being with his departure from the Earth after death. Christ died cosmically from the Sun down to the Earth. (*GA 240 Karmic Relationships Vol 4, 27/8/1924*).

Through the Mystery of Golgotha he then became the Spirit of the Earth, but as Earth Spirit he nevertheless still remained Sun Spirit; he has "transferred his work to the Earth and through this act drew the Earth into the work of the Sun .... and in the Spirit of the Earth we find the Christ-Ego, the Sun Ego. The initiate is henceforth able to see in Christ himself the Sun Spirit which formerly, at the time of Christmas, was only to be seen at the midnight hour of the Sun in the holy places of the ancients." (*GA 98 Christmas, 13/12/1907*).

How is that to be understood? "Our Earth has its ether body and its astral body. If our Earth did not have the etheric body that belongs to it, it would not be able to form an environment for plants; if our Earth did not have the astral body that belongs to it, it would not be able to support animals. If you want to imagine the etheric body of the Earth, you must think of its middle point in the middle point of the Earth, just as its physical body has its centre there. This whole physical Earth body is embedded in the etheric body of the Earth and these two together again in the astral body." In that moment in which the blood of Christ flowed from the Cross onto the Earth, the Christ became the Spirit of the Earth: "As true as it is that a soul-spirit dwells in your body, so it is true that in the Earth body - in that Earth body which consists of stones, plants and animals, and on which you walk around, there dwells the Soul-spirit of the Earth, and this Soul-spirit: that is the Christ." (*GA 103 Gospel of St John, 26/5/1908*).

What is here described, Rudolf Steiner has described many times, again and again, usually in connection with the interpretation which he gave to St John 13-18: "He who eats my bread treads me with his feet." Man eats the bread of the Earth, the Earth is the body of Christ. Man is the one who walks with his feet on the Earth-body, who thus treads with his feet the body of Him whose bread he eats.

In another context Rudolf Steiner expresses this fact thus: "The Christ is the planetary Spirit of our Earth, the Spirit Who from the beginning has come down to us from the Sun; Who, whilst leaving the high realms descended deeper and deeper into the spheres until He clothed himself with matter in Jesus of Nazareth, in order through this great sacrifice to awaken in the Christ Impulse, the highest development, which is the goal of our Earth development, which will only then have fulfilled its purpose when all humans have become as their Teacher was. The words which Christ speaks: 'who eats my bread treads me with his feet', are to be taken literally, for Christ is the Spirit of our Earth, the Earth is His physical body." (*GA 111 The Principle of Spiritual Economy, 14/6/1909*)

A few days before, Rudolf Steiner expressed this decisive utterance even more precisely: "Since then the Christ has become the Spirit of the Earth, the Planetary Spirit. The Earth is the body of the Christ; he has His dwelling place in the interior of the Earth." (*GA 111, 11/6/1909*)

Rudolf Steiner has described the interior of the Earth in three lectures in the year 1906. It has nine concentrically ordered layers. "The ninth and last layer is, so to speak, a dwelling place of the Planetary Spirit. It has two peculiar characteristics. You could compare it to a person, for it has an organ which is similar to a brain. Another organ is like a heart. The Planetary Spirit too is subject to changes which are closely connected to the development of men." (*GA 97 The Christian Mystery, 21/4/1906*).

In the lecture of 16/4/1906 (*GA 96 The Interior of the Earth*), Rudolf Steiner goes into more detail: "Then comes the ninth layer which immediately surrounds the Earth's mid-point. That is for a person of today, even for the already advanced spirit pupil, extremely difficult to penetrate. One can only say that one becomes aware how certain parts of the Earth's interior have a connection to separate organs of the human and animal body. Above all you find there forces which are transferred to the periphery. Those are forces which in their mode of working are hard to describe. They stand in a lively connection with the human brain and further inwards with the human heart functions. Further still inwards lie a sphere of such forces which have a connection with human and animal reproductive forces." If it is correctly reported that this innermost layer is the 'dwelling place of the Planetary Spirit', then one presumably has to imagine that we here have to do with something organlike, physical in the sense of a supersensible physical, after the style of the 'phantom' (*see GA 131 From Jesus to Christ*). The third description which Rudolf Steiner gives of the Earth's interior runs thus: "The Earth's core: that is substantially that through the influence of which black magic arises in the world. From here streams out the power of spiritual evil." (*GA 95 At the Gates of Spiritual Science, 4/9/1906*). We shall return to this question later.

With all this it should be observed: "that it is an essential question of the Christ development that one could search through the Earth in respect of its physical materiality far and wide after the Mystery of Golgotha, wherever one wished, wherever there is anything physical on the Earth, and one would not be able to find the Christ substance as such incarnated. And yet the whole Earth is permeated with the Christ substance because this Christ substance goes down to the ether sphere of the Earth, and in all the future will be found in the ether sphere of the Earth. .... Through the fact that Christ, since the Mystery of Golgotha, penetrates the physical substances of the Earth but does not bind Himself to them, nothing will remain in the Being of the Christ which could yearn back, after the throwing off of the Earth's shell at the Earth's death." (*GA 129 Wonders of the World, 19/8/1911*) What the Christ Sun Spirit actually does bind himself to, Rudolf Steiner often expresses in different ways: "The Christ is there, is united with the ether body of the Earth. The vital thing is that the human soul develops itself to be able to see Him." (*GA 129, 19/8/1911*) "It is the Being which step by step has become the Spirit of our Earth, the aura of our Earth, since the blood flowed

on Golgotha." (*GA 130 Esoteric Christianity and the Mission of Christian Rosenkreutz, 19/9/1911*).

"Since that time He has been united with the spiritual atmosphere of the Earth. He has become the Earth Spirit." (*GA 117 Deeper Secrets of Human History in the Gospel of St Matthew, 26/12/1909*).

"The consequence of this was that now the ether and astral spheres of the Earth were quite substantially permeated by the Christ Being." (*GA 129 Wonders of the World, 21/8/1911*)

"With the appearance of Christ on Earth, the astral body of this cosmic power of the Christ Spirit descended onto the Earth and since then His astral body has remained in continuous connection with the astral body of the Earth." (*GA 100 Theosophy and Rosicrucianism, 22/11/1907*).

The descent of the lofty Christ Sun Being to the Earth and His connection with our Earth world has yet another most important element: "Roughly in the middle of the development of the Old Sun there happened the great, vastly powerful event that a Being, during the Sun development, developed forces which stood in opposition to the finer, thinner ether elements. As distinct from what we call the Mystery of Golgotha, the great Earth sacrifice, we can speak of a Sun sacrifice, which consisted of the fact that although a Being chose to live among those gods which only wanted to live in the finer elements, yet this Being developed forces of a denser nature which were adequate to the nature of the Earth elements. And so, since the Sun development, we have in the ranks of those Beings which are actually armed with their forces only for the etheric, one Being which has an intimate relationship in the world-ether for the earthly. Since the Old Sun this Being has been waiting for the right moment to lead into the Earth itself the forces that it developed. And it was the great attainment of Zarathustra that he realised: 'In what is out there as the Sun there is something left over from the Old Sun that contains for the moment this Being. But the moment is approaching when this Being will also carry His form, which measures up to the Earth elements, down onto the Earth.' That which in one moment entered into the ranks of gods standing without, that was indeed the Christ, who at the baptism in the Jordan entered into the body of Jesus of Nazareth." (*GA 129 Wonders of the World, 25/8/1911*)

Let us make it clear to ourselves again: that at the midpoint of the Earth, the etheric of the Earth has its centre. The Planetary Spirit has its dwelling there and an organ-like substance appears which resembles the brain and the heart. The development of Earth and humanity runs parallel. In the course of the Earth development the heart system is formed which consists of "condensed ether-world, condensed forces of the ether-world." Again, in intimate connection with this stands the development of the brain. The brain could not be a viable instrument for our imaging life if there were not continual ether streams, etherising streams going up from the heart to the head. The 'upper' and 'lower' gods participate intimately in forming these structures. The lower gods work in the direction of a condensation, thickening, the upper gods towards an



etherisation. We must now imagine that the workings of both these groups of gods meet in the centre of the Earth, that is why the organ-like substance arises there, which becomes apparent to the seer as something resembling the human heart and brain. (Note: the lecture of 25/8/1911 in *GA 129 Wonders of the World*, is basic to the understanding of the above.)

However, the Christ does not totally expend Himself in the Being of the Planetary Spirit: "That is the difference between all the planetary gods and the Christ god, that the Christ god, in the sense of what I have been explaining, will leave after the death of the Earth no such physical star (also described as slag or peel), will leave nothing behind which would remain unspiritualised, but everything will go over into the spiritual completely, and will go over with the human souls to the Jupiter state as spirit. This gives us one of the basic differences between the planetary spirits and the Christ." (*GA 129, 21/8/1911*).

The upper gods are accompanied, so to speak, by a luciferic tendency and the lower gods by an ahrimanic tendency. This fact enables us to understand why the seer can also perceive something in the innermost layer of the Earth which shows itself as that "through the influence of which black magic arises in the world", and from which "the power of spiritual evil" emanates. Thus indeed the ahrimanic works onesidedly!

However, the Christ is not exhausted in the Being of the Planetary Spirit. It appears - after going, so to speak, through the mid-point of the Earth - once again in the surroundings, in the ether weaving of the Earth. (*c.f. George Adams and Olive Wicher*).

We have seen that as early as the Old Sun the Christ placed Himself between the upper and lower gods. But what lives and weaves between these upper and lower gods brings forth on Earth what we usually call 'Nature'. That is why the Christ is the Being who enspirits Nature, the spiritual life within Nature. We will now not find it odd when Rudolf Steiner says: "Everything that lives and burgeons and grows on Earth, that is the Christ. He is in all seeds, in all the trees, and in all that lives and burgeons on the Earth." (*GA 97 The Christian Mystery, 2/12/1906*). With the beginning of the year 1910, Rudolf Steiner begins speaking of the theme which is most important for our time: The re-appearance of the Christ in the etheric. Numerous lectures were given about this over many years. A number of them are gathered together in the volume *GA 118*. The core of all these lectures is the following:

The apostle Paul knew from his Hebrew initiation that the Christ would be incorporated in a human body. But as Saul he could not believe that the man who died on the cross was the Christ. Through the Damascus event however, he saw the Christ in the Earth's aura, for he had become clairvoyant. After that he could not only acknowledge the resurrection, he even became the apostle who did most of all for the spreading of Christianity. He had the Damascus experience as a premature birth. It will begin in the 20th century and will gradually encompass larger and larger groups of people, so that now, anyone can have such a Damascus experience who really cares about the

connection with the Christ. Rudolf Steiner calls the clairvoyance which emanates from this new Damascus experience, 'ether-seeing'.

The whole description of the divine-cosmic happening in which the lofty Christ Sun Spirit unites Himself with our Earth world, had to be given in order that cognition receive a strong and reliable foundation. Cognition should not remain a personal matter, but is the way to the possibility of realising the tasks of humanity. Anyone who will not travel the paths of such cognition can still say to himself, however: Spirit knowledge shows that the cosmic Christ-Being has intimately united Himself with the life of the Earth. Therein the words of Christ are corroborated: "I am with you all days until the end of the world."

With the following quotation we come now to the specific question of the Southern Hemisphere: "Let us now look at the plant and its relationship to the Earth. The plant has only a physical and etheric body, so for the plant only such a consciousness is possible as the human being has in sleep. Whilst the animal has a group-soul, the consciousness of the plant is concentrated in the centre of the Earth. The plants are so united with the Earth that they are to be seen as members of limbs of the Earth. The individual plants do not have an astral body, but they are embedded in the astral body of the Earth. The astral body of the Earth stands in a two-way relationship to that of the Sun. We find a process similar to the alternation of sleep and waking consciousness in man, in the higher consciousness of the Earth. As a result of that, the plants burgeon in summer, they germinate, grow, blossom towards the Sun. During the winter the astral body of the Sun withdraws from the Earth. The astral body of the Earth is thrown back on its own resources, it withdraws to the centre of the Earth, the vegetation of the Earth rests." (*GA 100 Theosophy and Rosicrucianism, 22/11/1907*).

This rising and falling life in the Earth's atmosphere, which causes the seasons and with which the Christ has intimately united Himself will now be examined.

# THE RHYTHMIC LIFE OF THE EARTH SPIRIT

The rhythmic rising and falling life of the Earth Spirit is described clearly by Rudolf Steiner in the lecture of 20/4/1915. (*GA 157 Etheric Man Within Physical Man*).

"If we take the whole course of the year we can make a justifiable comparison with what goes on in us through our waking and going to sleep in the course of twenty four hours. For it is wrong to compare the waking state of man, from waking up until going to sleep, with the summer; on the contrary, this very waking state must be compared in the Earth-Nature around us, with the winter, and the summer is analogous with the sleeping state of man. So we can say, to use this comparison: Man goes to sleep, that means he enters the summer of his personal existence, and when he wakes he progresses to the winter of his personal existence; and the waking state would roughly correspond to the previous autumn, the winter and the earliest spring. Why would that correspond to the facts? Because when we really progress in the way mentioned, to being a member of the whole Earth organism, then we must indeed take into account how that which is the Spirit of the Earth sleeps in summer; that is the actual sleeping state of the Earth, the great consciousness of the Spirit of the Earth withdraws. With the spring, the Earth Spirit begins to go to sleep and He awakens in the autumn when the first frosts arrive; He thinks then, He has His waking thinking state. That is the course of a day of the Earth Spirit through the year."

Then there follows a very interesting description of processes within this rhythm of waking and sleeping. Rudolf Steiner continues: "In that which I have called the Earth Spirit, who is really such a personal Being as we ourselves are, only that He leads a different existence - for, for Him, a year is a day - within this Earth Spirit everything becomes clear to us of what I have described as the Impulse of Golgotha, for in that we find the enlivening power which was not in the Earth before the Mystery of Golgotha; one finds oneself enfolded in the power, taken up by the Spirit, who went through the Mystery of Golgotha. And one receives the certainty that this Spirit has really flowed out into the Earth through the Mystery of Golgotha. We become conscious when we really immerse ourselves in the state in which, for us, the Earth is a Being to which we ourselves belong, just as a finger belongs to our organism. It can thus be not otherwise, than that for the people of our time, the occult deepening into the world takes on a colouration of religious immersion in that which streams through the world and spiritualises the world as the divine. That is why real knowledge of the spiritual world can never rob us of religious feeling, but on the contrary, can only deepen it."

How can a person come to the feeling that he belongs to the Being of the Earth, just as a separate finger belongs to our organism?

"When a person gets to the point that in his consciousness he no longer lives in himself, feels and knows in himself, then he grows to a higher level of consciousness where the ordinary things of the senses disappear for him as in sleep. To do that it is necessary for the person to be able to identify himself with the soul of the planet, with the Earth-soul.

We shall see that he has the ability to do this. We know that man does not only go to sleep and wake up, but on the other hand also experiences the Earth's other rhythms: winter, summer. If someone treads the path of Yoga or practises modern occult exercises, then he can rise above the normal consciousness which experiences the cycles of waking and sleeping, winter and summer, he can rise up by learning to look at himself from the outside. Then the person becomes aware that he can look back on himself as he looks on other things from the outside. Then he views also the things, the cycles, in outer life. He sees states which alternate. He sees how his body, as long as he is outside himself, takes on a form which is like the Earth, with its vegetation in summer. What material-physical science describes as nerves, this the person then begins to perceive as a sprouting of plant life on going to sleep; and when he returns again to daily consciousness, then he feels how this plant life shrinks up again and becomes the instrument of thinking, feeling and willing, in the waking consciousness of man. He feels his going out and re-entering the body as analogous to the changing of winter and summer on the Earth - he feels a summertime on going to sleep and a wintertime on awakening. It is not the other way round, as people might easily think, following external, superficial concepts. He comes to understand however, from this moment on, what the Earth Spirit is; that the Earth Spirit sleeps in summer and wakes in winter, and not the other way round.

“That is what the person gets to know, he gets to know the great experience of identifying himself with the Earth Spirit. From this moment on he says: I don't only live in my skin; like the cell in my organism, so do I live in the organism of the Earth. The Earth sleeps in summer and wakes in winter, as I sleep and wake in the changes of the day. And as the cell stands to my consciousness, so do I stand to the consciousness of the Earth.” (*GA 146 Occult Significance of the Bhagavad Gita, 29/5/1913*)

It could be objected that the experiences here described are only available to those who have absolved the corresponding esoteric schooling. but it must be remembered that esoteric schooling only anticipates something which will one day be a universally available experience. The time will come when people will realise that it is more practical to be orientated according to esoteric points of view because the latter lead human nature to optimum results. The content of the above quotation has been developed in more detail by Rudolf Steiner in the cycle *'The Effects of Spiritual Development'* (*GA 145*). In this cycle he says that one day even school lessons will be given from such points of view. (lecture of 23/3/1913).

Rudolf Steiner has described this rhythmic life of the Earth many times. Frequently he adds yet other important aspects, for example in the lecture of 23/5/1912 (*GA 155 On the Meaning of Life*): "Man has a single nature controlling his physical and etheric bodies; a single psycho-spiritual nature belongs to that which is his physical human body and etheric human body. But there are a great many spirits belonging to the Earth-body. What in man's psycho-spiritual nature is a unity, is, as regards that of the Earth, a multiplicity. This is the the chief distinction. With the exception of this difference, everything else is in a certain way analogous. To occult vision is revealed how in the same measure as green plants come forth from the Earth in spring,

those spirits whom we call the Earth-spirits withdraw from the Earth. Only here again they do not, as is the case with man, absolutely leave the Earth; they move round it, they pass in a certain way to the other side of the Earth. When it is summer in one hemisphere, it is winter in the other. In the case of the Earth, the spiritual part moves from the northern to the southern hemisphere when summer is approaching in the north."

As such descriptions are of great significance for our question, we shall quote from two further sections in each case the most important paragraph: "In summer the spiritual beings which are connected with the plant kingdom sleep, and in winter they awaken and permeate the mass of the planet. Now it is of course so, that while it is winter on the one half of the Earth, it is summer on the other half. How does that work out? The rhythmic interplay is such that the spirits of the Earth, when they leave the northern half of the Earth in summer, migrate to the southern half. They permeate and migrate around the Earth rhythmically." (*GA 143 On the Calendar of the Soul*, 7/5/1912).

"They which are the spirits of the Earth, they go to sleep in the spring and awaken as Earth spirits in the autumn and winter. In the winter they are united as Earth spirits with the Earth, only to rise again in spring and summer into the heaven's heights, into the astral heights, and onto the other side of the Earth. When we have spring again, then they go to sleep once more. That is not contradicted by the fact that the Earth sleeps, first on the one half and then on the other half." (*GA 143*, 16/5/1912)

A further, very detailed description is to be found in the cycle 'The Spiritual Beings in the Heavenly Bodies and the Kingdoms of Nature' (*GA 136*, 4/4/1912). There above all the specific tasks of certain beings, which are otherwise frequently referred to generally as 'Spirits of the Earth' are precisely described. Then it is said that those spirits who direct the work of the nature spirits can be described collectively as the Astral body of the Earth: "And that which the astronomer finds out through his calculations, of the turning of the Earth upon its axis, that is perceivable to the occult eye through the fact that he knows that distributed around the whole Earth are the spirits of the periods of rotation, who in reality are the bearers of the forces which turn the Earth upon its axis. It is extremely important that in the Astral body of the Earth all that is seen which is connected with the ordinary alternation, with the blossoming and withering of the plants, but also that which is connected with the alternation right through to day and night, in the seasons of the year, in the times of the day, etcetera."

We must not lose from our consciousness that the Earth Spirit is the lofty Christ Sun Being, Who on Golgotha went through death. How can this fact be reconciled with the plurality of beings which have been described, which make up the Astral body of the Earth, with which the Christ has united Himself?

"We must again learn to understand that indeed an extra-terrestrial Being Who experienced death and was thereby dissolved in the Earth development, lives with us in the Earth development. But we must develop the great modesty to recognise that of course this Being stands far above what the human condition of soul can experience.

This Being has descended from worlds where dying does not take place. Who are the serving beings for this Christ Being? Not all have come to the same sacrifice; not all have descended to the Earth and died. Beings beginning with the hierarchy of the Angeloi up into the upper hierarchies serve the Christ, Who has united Himself with the Earth development. But we do not discover them if we do not raise ourselves to super-terrestrial knowledge of the upper hierarchies. That which leads to the Christ must be sought from the knowledge of the spiritual worlds. We first need Spiritual Science in order to come once again to knowledge of the Christ. For the Christ is on Earth, but that which surrounds Him is in the world of the upper hierarchies. And it was the great temptation of humanity in recent times that it went through a new (materialistic) science, with all its great triumphs, that it could only take upon itself recognition of the outer forces of nature. But behind all these forces of nature live the spiritual beings. It is quite right what the new science says, but behind these forces of nature - guiding and leading - are the spiritual beings who serve the Christ. The Christ is in everything which is of Earth development. Super-terrestrial beings serve Him, but knowledge of super-terrestrial beings can be obtained only through Spiritual Science. That is why Spiritual Science has an infinitely significant task as regards the renewal of Christianity. You will see from this that we cannot pursue this Spiritual Science today in such a way that we look upon it only as a personal matter." (*GA 203 The Present Crisis in Man's Development, 27/2/1921*).

We see then that the lofty Christ Sun Spirit who came to the Earth, took on a body in Jesus of Nazareth, went through death, and can be seen today 'in the etheric', that this Spirit is a Being whose cosmic magnitude can not be encompassed with our limited capacity of soul. We must be humble enough to acknowledge this. Although this Christ Being is, as Earth-Spirit in the midst of a plurality of serving beings, also "really such a personal being as we ourselves are", it is by no means limited to what a person can already experience today as the Christ. It is certainly true that He stands by us in brotherhood in all our need, taking inner part in our destiny quite personally. But what we can perceive of Him in moments of Grace can only be that which, as a result of our limited perceptual possibilities, reveals itself to us through the beings that serve Him.

This is a point which for many souls, even if they are genuinely striving towards a renewed Christianity, forms a basic difficulty, for a gap exists between 'the simple man of Nazareth', which, when all is said and done, is all that on the one hand remains to famished souls through the spiritual shrinking process of Protestantism, and the super-terrestrial, cosmic glory of the lofty Sun-Being; and this gap is too great to be bridged in just a few decades. It is understandable then, that a world-view which talks about the Christ living in the rhythms of the year, and Who can be seen in the etheric, has trouble in finding acceptance. Where a soul does not succeed in penetrating to new ideas in its own, often strenuous struggles, it will seize only too easily on traditions for support.

In the year 1923 Rudolf Steiner held two cycles of lectures which, for our question, are extremely important. They form the culmination of all which had been so far developed about the course of the year:

1. *'The Cycle of the Year as Breathing Process of the Earth and the Four Main Festivals'* (GA 223).
2. *'The Four Seasons and the Archangels - Experience of the Course of the Year in Four Cosmic Imaginations'* (GA 229).

In *'The Cycle of the Year'* - we can call it that for short - the great terrestrial, cosmic interplay of the seasons is viewed "as a sort of great breathing". There is no longer any talk of sleeping and waking. The Earth-Spirit is given His name: The Christ. There is, though, talk of the 'Christ-Impulse', of the 'Christ-power', of 'Christ Jesus', and even of 'Jesus'. At the end of the first lecture Rudolf Steiner gives a sort of summary of the whole; we will quote this here, although the cycle is generally well known. We must take into consideration - this must be said in advance - that the descriptions are so given that in each case they refer to one part of the Earth, to one of the hemispheres. Needless to say, that also applies to the drawings with which he illustrates his words. That this is so, is clear not only from the words of this lecture itself but also from previous quotations. Rudolf Steiner says: "In respect of this breathing we can always only consider one part of the Earth at a time. We are considering that part where we live ourselves; on the opposite side of the Earth the conditions are of course likewise, the opposite. We must picture to ourselves the breathing of the Earth so that at one place on the Earth there is breathing out, on the opposite place breathing in." (GA 223, 31/3/1923).

Seven weeks later Rudolf Steiner took the theme up once again, formulating it quite precisely: "While in the north the Earth Soul is going out to the stars, is visible to spiritual vision, so to speak, like a comet's tail drawing out into the heavens, on the other side the Earth Soul withdraws into the Earth, and it is Christmas. And again vice versa, when here (Norway) the Earth Soul withdraws, on the other side the comet's tail stretches out into the cosmos. That is happening at the same time." (GA 226 *Man's Being, His Destiny and World Evolution*, 21/5/1923).

But now to the summary from *'The Cycle of the Year'*:

"At Christmas time the Earth has taken up its soul-content into itself, the Earth has taken its soul-content, in the great breath of the year, up into itself. The Christ Impulse is born in the content of the Earth-soul, which the Earth has taken up into the interior of the Earth. It streams out into the cosmos with the breathing out of the Earth towards springtime. It gazes at that which has star-nature and enters into a reciprocal activity with it, but in such a way that it no longer enters merely spatially into a relationship but also in time, so that the time element is taken out of the spatial.

"Easter is the first Sunday after the spring full moon. The human being lifts himself out into the cosmic with his soul-content within the full breathing out, saturates and permeates himself with the nature of the stars, takes up the breath of the world himself with the Earth's breathing, permeates himself with the nature of Easter. And with that with which he has begun to permeate himself since Easter time, in that he stands most strongly during the St John's Time; he must then return with the Earth-soul and at the

same time with his own soul-content into the Earth, but is dependent upon Michael standing by him so that he can penetrate in the right way into the earthly, after overcoming the Ahrimanic through the forces of Michael.

“And all the time the soul-content of the Earth withdraws more and more with the power of the inflowing breath back into the earthly itself until Christmas-time is there. And Christmas-time is celebrated today in the right way then by the person who says to himself: Michael has cleansed the Earth so that at Christmastime the birth of the Christ-Impulse can take place in the correct way. Then again the flowing out into the cosmic takes place. Here Christ takes Michael with Him in the flowing out, so that Michael can again acquire for himself those forces out of the cosmic which he has used up in his battle against the earthlyahrimanic. With the Easter mood Michael too begins to immerse himself into the cosmic again, interweaves himself with the cosmic most strongly in the St John's time.

“And a person who in the right sense has a grasp of that which in our time binds him as a human being with the earthly, says to himself: For us the age is beginning in which we see the Christ-Impulse correctly, if we know how this Impulse is accompanied in the correct way by the power of Michael in the seasons of the year; if we, so to speak, see the Christ moving, flowing, into the earthly, and up into the cosmic, accompanied in the relevant way by Michael's battling in the Earth, by Michael who conquers for himself the power of battle in the spaces of the universe.”

One may immediately feel, if one makes that which has been described here one's own, how huge the step is which has been made, through the Science of the Spirit, from a traditional, ecclesiastical understanding of the Christ, to such a cosmic panorama. How can I penetrate all of this with my thoughts and feelings?

Let us imagine for a moment that we have a good friend with whom we are deeply connected. Our friendship can undergo a fundamental enrichment and deepening by having times when we are intimately together, alternating with times of separation. In our soul we might even feel ourselves more closely connected with this person in times of separation, understand a number of things about him much better. Not for nothing is there a saying: 'Absence makes the heart grow fonder'. But then our friendship will get a new slant through our being together again. New things that we have in common will be discovered, relationships of a more inward nature will thereby be possible.

Such an image can make understanding easier of that which the soul experiences in its relationship to the Christ Being, "for human souls perceive in their subconscious or in their clairvoyant impressions this breathing in of the Earth's soul-content as processes within their own souls." (*GA 223 The Cycle of the Year, 31/3/1923*).

It is really so that, for example, in the peak of summer, the Christ distances Himself, as it were, while He is flowing out with the soul-content of the Earth into the Cosmos:



In ancient times "... one used to see that that which consists of the Earth spirits draws away in spring in order, so to speak, to go up into cosmic heights. In the autumn these spirits come down again. That used to be perceived in ancient times, so it was natural to draw something like an absence of the actual spiritual content of the Earth from the Earth. On the other hand, a shooting up takes place of the elemental nature spirits as in a paroxysm, and a staying behind of that which is the earth-bodily of the Earth, which as a consequence, becomes apparent as the content of the senses."

(GA 143 *Anthroposophical Quarterly* 18:1, 16/5/1912)

We shall see how in the polar opposite time, the deep winter, the soul can, on the other hand, have a quite intimate meeting with the Christ.

All this does not change the fact that the soul who seeks help can reach the Christ at all times of the year, at any place all over the Earth. Just as the human soul can concentrate itself on one essential content through an effort of will within itself, although a thousand enticing beautiful things try to tear its attention to the outer world, thus can the endlessly loving and compassionate Christ-will find the one soul in need of help and concentrate itself to a helping force in the proximity of the soul. The 'roadway' on which the Christ finds His way to me, is my confidence in Him. - It is inevitable however, that we here remind ourselves once again: "We must develop the great modesty to recognise that of course this Being (The Christ), stands far above that which the human capacity of soul can experience." (GA 203 *The Present Crisis in Man's Development*, 27/2/1921).

In '*The Cycle of the Year*' it is also mentioned how the Christ is accompanied by Michael fighting in the Earth, with the power of battle which he conquered for himself in the widths of the universe. That leads us to the second of the cycles referred to, the so-called '*Archangel Imaginations*'. (GA 229).

In these lectures too the indication is specific: "... that that which is for the one hemisphere of the Earth wintertime is for the other hemisphere summertime. You must keep that in the back of your mind, that that is so." (*lecture 2*).

Who then are these four Archangels, Gabriel, Raphael, Uriel and Michael? In the first place they belong without doubt to those beings who serve the Christ. Further back we talked about the Spirits of the Ages (cyclic periods), the bearers of the forces which turn the Earth on its axis. In the cycle '*The Mission of Individual Folk Souls*' (GA 121), we learn in the first two lectures that Archangels who take on definite tasks can become Spirits of Cyclic Ages, although the actual Spirits of the Cyclic Ages are Archai, that is they stand a whole step higher than the Archangeloi. Of Michael we know that he is indeed the 'Spirit of the Time' of today. But we may suppose that the others have attained a higher rank too. When it is said that they are the bearers of those forces which turn the Earth's axis, that does not of course mean that they sweat away at a vast invisible jack. Their activity keeps the development going. All cosmic movements are nothing but the expression of development.

These four Archangels belong then to that which was earlier referred to simply as 'the astral' of Earth. But with this the Christ has intimately united Himself through the death on the Cross on Golgotha. That is why they are now His travelling companions in the great terrestrial-cosmic movement.

The Archangel Imaginations belong to the most beautiful Rudolf Steiner has given us. It was even intended that the contents should be dramatised. They would surely have been dramas in the true sense of the Greek word 'dromenon' (deed, work, but also the holy mystery-cult).

In the fifth Archangel Imagination (*13/10/1923*), Rudolf Steiner speaks of the working together of the four regents of the seasons. He particularly shows how they succeed one another in the cosmic heights at the same time, though they send their forces through the Earth to the other side. And he quotes the "old magic word, taken up again from Goethe":

How each the Whole its substance gives,  
each in the other works and lives!  
See Heavenly forces rising and descending,  
their golden urns reciprocally lending:  
on wings that winnow sweet blessing  
from Heaven through the Earth they're pressing,  
to fill the All with harmonies caressing!

The Archangels work in a double way: in the cosmos they ray out, and they send their forces through the Earth. "When Uriel is down below for the inhabitants of the other hemisphere, then his forces penetrate through the Earth to us." And so as Uriel works in nature at midsummer, he works in the wintertime in the human head. So the same forces come at one time out of the cosmos, the other time, so to speak from below, into the human being, raying through the Earth. So it is with all four regents of the seasons, with Gabriel for the winter, Raphael for the spring, Uriel for the summer, and Michael for the autumn. But a most important metamorphosis is involved: the Uriel forces work in summer in the clouds, in the rain, in lightning and thunder, and ray into the growth of plants. When they penetrate up through the Earth in winter, they get as far as our heads and give rise there to an image of the cosmos, "so that we are possessors of human wisdom". The powers of nature are transformed into human wisdom. It is by no means the same whether the workings of the Archangels come down from the cosmos or become available to us by "pressing up through the Earth".

When in these contexts the polarity of north-winter and south-summer and vice versa are so clearly stressed, it must also be pointed out that there are quite large differences between a north-winter and a south-winter - similarly of course between the two summers. That has mainly to do with the asymmetry of the surface of our Earth. In the southern hemisphere there are the gigantic areas of water, whilst in the northern hemisphere the continents dominate. But: when we are talking about the great cosmic rhythms, climatic and meteorological conditions of a regional nature do not come into

consideration. Even when, for instance, in the northern hemisphere snow is lying at Easter, it is nevertheless the cosmic springtime. The regents of the seasons as Spirits of Cyclic Ages, have nothing to do with climate and weather but with the perfectly regular course of the Sun.

## THE MEETING WITH THE SON-GOD

What is actually the sense behind this rhythmic weaving, this 'rhythm of time', which we know as sleeping and waking, as the process of breathing, as the course of the year? It has to do with the basic law of all development: "Thus the various states between sleeping and waking go through a development. But these states are quite general ones, they show themselves in all sorts of realms. We can say: wherever we look we can see that sleeping and waking states are really necessary."

*(GA 147 Secrets of the Threshold, 9/3/1915)*

There are three basic rhythms of existence which actually are deeply, inwardly related:

Sleeping	-	Waking
Summer	-	Winter
Life	-	Death

In each of these rhythms a connection is revealed to a Being of the highest divine Trinity.

Up to now we have not spoken of the relationship in which the lofty Christ Sun Being stands to the Trinity. It is not the purpose of this essay even so much as to indicate a Christology. So when it is said that the human being in his life between birth and death can have meetings in a certain way with the Spirit-God, the Son-God, and the Father-God, we must limit ourselves to that which is relevant to our question.

In the cycle '*Cosmic and Human Metamorphoses*' (GA 175) Rudolf Steiner, in the course of several lectures, speaks of these three meetings.

A human being enters the spiritual world in sleep, he is during sleep in that which is his most holy human aspect. "Yes, such things must live themselves into our feeling through Science of the Spirit. Then our life itself will be transformed by a magic aroma of holiness. And then we shall connect a definite, a positive concept with that which is called the Grace of the Spirit". (GA 175, 6/3/1917). In short, we may speak of a nightly meeting with the Holy Spirit. The process comes about through the fact that our Angel is the go-between in a meeting with our Spirit-Self, into which the Holy Spirit shines. Through this meeting the human being prepares his future.

But the human being also has a meeting with the Father-God. This takes place once, usually in the middle of life, earlier in the case of an early death. The go-between here is a being from the hierarchy of the Archai, a 'Spirit of Time', and it is connected with the essence of that which makes up his descent, his stream of inheritance, the building up of his physical body. In this case the human being is grappling with his past. These two meetings have been partially torn out of the natural order of things. In earlier times the human being went to bed when the sun set, and rose at dawn. He has emancipated himself from this, although he must maintain the daily rhythm of waking and sleeping if he does not want to suffer damage in his whole being. The time when the human being entered his earthly course of life was in earlier times similarly embedded in the natural

order. An echo of this can be found in the old Germanic Hertha Mysteries. Conception was bound to the springtime, so all births took place in the winter. The human being has emancipated himself from this too, although in his body the rhythms themselves have remained, for instance, in the woman's monthly rhythm and in the time which the embryo needs from conception to birth. The difficulties and danger of premature birth show how indispensable such rhythms are even today.

So we see that the human being today has partially loosened himself from the rhythm of sleeping and waking, and the larger rhythm of life and death; we shall come back to the problem of emancipation in more detail.

Let us now turn to the rhythm of summer and winter. It determines the course of the Earth's year, with its polarity of north-summer / south-winter, north-winter / south-summer. We have seen that as regards the meeting with the Father and the Spirit, many aspects have been loosened up and displaced.

"On the other hand, there is much less possibility of displacing the second meeting. For that which is more connected with the astral body and the etheric body, that is not so easily displaced with regard to the macro-cosmic order. That which is connected with the ego and the physical body is displaced very strongly for people of today. So the second meeting is connected more with the great macrocosmic order. This second meeting is bound to the course of the year in just the same way as the first meeting is bound to the course of the day. And here I must draw your attention to some points which I have already discussed from other points of view.

"The life of a human being in its wholeness actually does not proceed in the whole course of the year in a uniform way, but the human being goes through changes during the course of the year. In the summer time when the sun has developed its highest warmth, the human being is much more given over to his physical life and therewith also the physical life of the surroundings than during the winter, when the human being must to some extent fight against the outer elemental phenomena, when he is thrown more onto his own resources. His spiritual aspect is then more torn free - from itself and also from the Earth - and he is more connected with the spiritual world, with the whole spiritual environment. Hence the unique feeling which we connect with the Mystery and Festival of Christmas, a feeling which is by no means arbitrary but which is connected with the timing of the Christmas Festival.

"In those winter days where the festival has been placed, the human being lives, so to speak, in a realm where the Spirit is close to him. And the consequence of this is that around the Christmas time until roughly our present-day New Year, the human being goes through a meeting of his astral body with the Life-Spirit, just as he went through a meeting of the ego with the Spirit-Self for the first meeting. And on this meeting with the Life-Spirit depends the nearness of Christ Jesus. For Christ Jesus reveals Himself through the Life-Spirit. He reveals Himself through a being from the realm of the Archangeloi. Needless to say, He is a much higher Being, but that is not the point here. The point is that He reveals Himself through a being from the realm of the Archangeloi.

So that through this meeting for the development of today, for the development since the Mystery of Golgotha, we stand particularly close to Christ Jesus, and that we can call this meeting with the Life-Spirit in a certain way also, the meeting with Christ Jesus, which takes place in the deeper, more hidden layers of the soul.

“If now - either through the development of spiritual consciousness in the realm of religious deepening and practice or, complementing this, through the absorption of the images of Spiritual Science - if now the human being deepens his life of feelings, spiritualised in the way described, then he will experience the after-effects of the meeting with the Life-Spirit, that is with the Christ, just as he can experience in waking life the after-effects of the meeting with the Genius (Angel). And it is indeed so that in the time which follows on from the Christmas time which I have indicated, right up to Easter time, the conditions are quite especially favourable for bringing to consciousness the meeting of the human being with the Christ Jesus". (*GA 175, 20/2/1917*)

It is unavoidable that we quote here in full, as every nuance is important. In the next lecture Rudolf Steiner repeats it once more:

"But the human being is well and properly placed in the order of nature with regard to that which has immediate meaning for his 'now', his present time, that which has an immediate relationship to his earthly existence. Whilst he carries past and future in himself with regard to the Father-principle and with regard to the Spirit-principle, he is bound to the order of nature with regard to that meeting of which I have said that it takes place in the course of the year and furthermore is connected with the meeting with the Christ. If the human being were not bound to the order of nature, the consequence would be that one person would celebrate Christmas in December, another in March, and so on. But although different peoples vary with regard to what they call the Christmas Festival, yet some sort of festivity, which always has some sort of connection with this meeting, with that which I have described, falls in the latter days of December. With regard to this meeting which is placed in the course of the year, the human being stands then, because this is his 'now', his present time, in immediate connection with the course of nature. Here he fits in to the course of nature, whilst in connection with past and future he has stepped out of the course of nature, has already done so for thousands of years." (*GA 175, 27/2/1917*)

Although quite clearly expressed by the context, it is necessary to stress by virtue of the importance of the whole argument, that when Rudolf Steiner talks here about 'December' etc., he of course speaks from the standpoint of the northern hemisphere, for the calendar taken over from the north and transferred to the south does not correspond with the course of nature. That anyway becomes perfectly clear in the sixth lecture; Rudolf Steiner speaks there about the Mysteries that once existed in which a knowledge of the secrets of the year's course was taken for granted. Suitable personalities were so prepared that, during a sequence of days in the winter time, "it is the time in which the universe speaks more intimately with the Earth than in other times", communications could be received from the cosmos.

"There were once times on Earth in which people would never have had recourse to social laws, legal punishments, without first seeking guidance from those who were able to receive the secrets of the macrocosm. Later epochs have still kept dim, dubious echoes of this greatness but only in superstitious images. When lead is poured on New Year's Eve to see what the coming year is going to bring, that is only the superstitious left-over of the great holy thing that I have just described to you. At that time it was really a matter of making the spirit - the spirit of Man - fertile, in such a way that that which can only flow out of the cosmos could be transferred onto the Earth - because it was desired that the life of people on Earth should not merely be the result of that which can be experienced in the world. Similarly it was known that in the summer the Earth stands in a totally different relationship to the universe, that during the summer time the Earth cannot, so to speak, receive any intimate communications from the cosmos. ....

“So that we have this meeting which the human being has with the spiritual world in the course of the seasons on whichever part of the world at the time when, for that particular spot on the Earth, it is the Christmas-winter-time; we can call this meeting the meeting with the Son. So that in the course of the year the human being really goes through a rhythm which is formed according to the rhythm of the year itself and in which he experiences a uniting with the world of the Son.” (*GA 175, 13/3/1917*)

The long quotation following here is important. The whole secret of the Christian year can be understood if we make the following passage our own:

"Now, we do know, however, that through the Mystery of Golgotha that Being whom we call the Christ united Himself with the Earth's course. Precisely in the epoch in which this uniting took place .... the immediate perception of the spiritual world became dimmed. We see the objective fact: the event of Golgotha is connected with the change in the evolution of humanity on the Earth itself. But we can therefore also say: there were times in the Earth's development in which people in the context of old atavistic clairvoyance, through getting to know the intimate dialogue of the Earth with the macrocosmos, came into a relationship with the Christ. And on this is based that which with a certain right many a sensible modern scholar, many a student of religion, accepts: that there was such a thing as a primeval revelation of the Earth. But it came about in the way I have described. A primeval revelation. And the separate religions around the Earth are the fragments of that revelation which have become decadent.

"But those who have accepted the Mystery of Golgotha, in which position are they then? They are in the position that they can express the most inward confession to the spiritual content of the universe in the following way: What could still be perceived in ancient times through a dialogue of the Earth towards the cosmos, that has descended and has appeared in the course of the Mystery of Golgotha as a human being, in the man Jesus of Nazareth. Having knowledge again of the Christ, who lived in Jesus of Nazareth, of the Being who earlier became visible to people in the course of the year through atavistic clairvoyance, that is something which must be more and more stressed for the spiritual development of mankind. For through this the two elements of Christianity would be united, which actually have to be united, if on the one hand it is going to

develop in the correct way and if on the other hand humanity is going to develop in the right way. With this aim is connected the fact that the legend of the Christ Jesus is slotted into the course of the year as the celebration of the Festival of Christmas, of Easter, of Whitsun. And with that, as I have already stated in a previous lecture, is connected the fact that the Christmas Festival has a fixed date, but the Easter Festival is regulated according to the constellations of the heavens. That the Christmas Festival is celebrated according to earthly conditions, is kept in what is always the very depth of winter, that is connected with the fact that the meeting with the Christ, with the Son, actually takes place at that season."

“However, the fact that the Christ is a Being that belongs to the Macrocosmos, has descended from the Macrocosmos, and is of one nature with the Macrocosmos, just that is expressed by the way that it depends on the spring sun and moon constellations as to when the Easter Festival shall take place. Likewise the Christmas Festival is meant to express that the Christ made his journey to Earth. And so it is justified to fit that into the course of the year which belongs to the course of the year through the rhythm of human life. And because this is something so profound in relation to the inner life of Man, so it is similarly justified in connection with the fitting in of festivals which relate to the Mystery of Golgotha, that the human being sticks to celebrating the festivals in harmony with the rhythm of the universe at large and not to displace them in the way that sleeping and waking are displaced in the modern urban life.

"You see then, we are dealing here with something wherein the human being is not yet so free, where he should not yet lift himself out of the objective course of the universe, where it should come to his consciousness every year (where he can no longer communicate with the universe through atavistic clairvoyance), that something lives in him that belongs to the universe, that finds its expression in the year's course.

“Now, among the things which are perhaps most found fault with in Spiritual Science by certain religious sects, is that according to Spiritual Science the Christ Impulse must once again be bound up with the whole universe. Spiritual Science takes nothing away - I have often stressed that - from religious traditions concerning the Christ Jesus; but it adds that which this Mystery of the Christ Jesus has around it as regards relationships of the Earth to the whole universe. Spiritual Science seeks the Christ not only on the Earth, it seeks Him in the whole universe." (*GA 175, 13/3/1917*)

We had to quote so extensively in order to make clear that the meeting with the Christ, the Son God, takes place in the winter, when the Earth has breathed in its soul-content. That Rudolf Steiner was very conscious of the varying conditions around the globe is shown by the remark that the meeting with the Christ takes place "on whichever part of the world at the time when, for that particular spot on the Earth, it is the Christmas-wintertime."

In the year 1923, however, he expressed himself even more clearly: "While in the north the Earth Soul is going out to the stars, is visible to spiritual vision so to speak like a comet's tail drawing out into the heavens, on the other side of the Earth the soul of the



Earth withdraws into the Earth, and it is Christmas. And again vice versa, when here (Norway) the Earth Soul withdraws, on the other side the comet's tail stretches out into the cosmos. That is happening at the same time." (*GA 226 Man's Being, His Destiny and World Evolution, 21/5/1923*).

The following difficulty emerges here: whilst in the lecture cycle from which we have extensively quoted (*GA 175*), Rudolf Steiner says expressly that the human being in respect of the meeting with the Christ in the Christmas-winter-time, ought not to emancipate himself from the course of the year as the course of nature, he says in 1923:

"When the human being came to feel the roundness of the Earth, he then also became independent of the course of the year. As long as he lived in his own district, his locality, the year's course was something absolute for him. Today, when people have no difficulty travelling across the world, now, through coming continually into different districts, the experiences of the course of the year are reduced - today the human being, because of what he has in the external world, can no longer experience the course of the year. He also no longer has the same intensive understanding of the festivals. Just think how little concreteness, how much abstraction is contained in the festivals today! We know out of tradition that at Christmas we give one another presents, and we are glad that we have a break from school. At Easter we perhaps see all sorts of ceremonies that are connected by tradition with the things I have discussed. But where today do people get a concrete feeling of the spiritual world with the course of the year?

"We cannot have festivals today out of a full understanding of the course of the year. Not only has the human being become personally in himself an ego-being, a free being, but the Earth itself has become emancipated out of cosmic space. The Earth itself in recent times no longer stands in such an inward connection to cosmic space, at least as regards the development of humanity, as it did in ancient times. And so the human being has become more and more obliged to seek within himself that which he cannot find outside." (*GA 226 Man's Being, His Destiny and World Evolution, 21/5/1923*)

The question arises from this: What does this emancipation mean for the Earth and for the human being? We shall see that there is no contradiction here as might be supposed at first glance. Apparent contradictions often point to deeper truths, to which superficial thinking can scarcely find access.

Before we close this Chapter, I should like to mention another significant matter. Rudolf Steiner draws our attention, as we have shown above, to the fact that the most diverse peoples had something like a Christmas festival in the last days of December. He speaks of course of the northern hemisphere. For the southern hemisphere such a festival would have to fall in the last days of June. We find indeed such a festival with the Incas. It is called the 'Inti Raymi'. H.D. Disselhoff gives a lively description of it in his book 'The Empire of the Incas and the Early Cultures of the Andes' - see the chapter called 'Inti Raymi - the festival of the winter solstice in June'. It was the chief festival of the year.

# THE EMANCIPATION OF EARTH AND THE HUMAN BEING

Let us recall to our consciousness the apparently contradictory statements of Rudolf Steiner: first, in 1917, he says: "You see then, we are dealing here with something wherein the human being is not yet so free, where he should not yet lift himself out of the objective course of the universe ....". Then, in 1923, he says: "The human being .... became independent of the course of the year" and "the Earth itself has become emancipated out of cosmic space."

First, how can the Earth emancipate itself from cosmic space? We find an answer to this in the second scientific course (*Warmth course, GA 321, 2/3/1920*): "This is now the main point, that in the time from the 15th to the 17th centuries the consciousness was totally lost that the Earth is a body within the whole solar system; that every detail on Earth must have to do with the whole solar system. Consciousness was lost that the solidifying of bodies is even founded on the fact that the earthly is emancipating itself from the cosmic, that it tears itself free, gives itself independent laws, whilst for instance that which is gaseous, the air, remains as regards its laws under the influence of the Being of the Sun, which is all one for the whole Earth.". So the solidifying of bodies (of objects) is the expression of the emancipation of the earthly from the cosmic.

Now Rudolf Steiner has given a detailed justification for the statement that the human being should not yet lift himself out of the objective course of the universe. He says: "What cannot be displaced is the middle area, the fitting in to the course of the year. Through this adapting to the course of the year something ought and must be retained in the human heart (Gemut)." (*GA 175 Cosmic and Human Metamorphoses, Lecture 4*).

What ought and must be retained?

"What then is the whole point of the human development on Earth? It is that the human being adapts to the Earth, that he absorbs the conditions of the Earth-development, that he carries into the future of his own development that which the Earth can give him; I don't mean merely in one incarnation but right through all incarnations what the Earth can give him for his later development. That is the point of the Earth-development. This point of the Earth-development can only be fulfilled by the human being's gradually forgetting, so to speak, his connection with the celestial powers. We know that in ancient times people had an atavistic clairvoyance, but that it was just into this atavistic clairvoyance that the celestial powers worked; the kingdom of heaven protruded so to speak, into the human heart (Gemut). That had to change so that the human being could develop freedom. In the way he saw things, in his immediate perception, the human being was not any longer to have anything from the kingdom of heaven, so that he could become related to the Earth. For this reason alone the possibility is also given that in the most extreme period of his relationship to the Earth, the human being became materialistic, that is in the fifth epoch, in which we now live.

Materialism is only the most radical, most extreme expression of Man's relationship to the Earth. The result of that, though, would be that the human being would fall prey to the Earth if nothing else happened. The human being would have to become so related to the Earth that he would gradually have to share the Earth's fate; he would have to tread the paths that the Earth itself is taking; he would have to fit in completely to the Earth's development if nothing else happened. He would, as it were, have to tear himself out of the cosmos with the Earth and bind his fate completely to the fate of the Earth.

“But that was never the intention for humanity - the intention for humanity was quite different: the human being was on the one hand meant to unite himself properly with the Earth, but there should be news, content from the spiritual world which, in spite of the relationship of his nature to the Earth, would lead him beyond this relationship. This bringing down of the heavenly content, that happened through the Mystery of Golgotha. That is why the Being who went through the Mystery of Golgotha had on the one hand to take on human nature, but on the other hand had to carry heavenly being within itself. That however means: that we must not imagine the Christ Jesus merely as being yet another person in human development, even if he were the highest, but that He is a person who takes into Himself heavenly being, not just spreading a teaching but bearing into the Earth that which comes from heaven. That is why it is important to understand what actually happened at the baptism in Jordan: that it was not merely a moral happening - I don't say it wasn't a moral happening but not merely a moral happening - but a real happening, where something happens which is as real as the events of nature are real, so real as when I warm something with some source of heat and heat is transferred into the thing I am heating up; like that the Christ-Being is taken up into the human being Jesus of Nazareth at the baptism in Jordan. That is certainly a moral matter in the highest degree but also in the course of nature a real matter, in the same way that the phenomena of nature are real. And that's the vital thing that has to be understood, that we are not dealing with something or other which derives from rationalistic human concepts which always correspond with the course of nature in its mechanical, physical or chemical aspects, but that it is something which as idea simultaneously stands in actual reality, just as the laws of nature are part of actual reality, or rather as the forces of nature form part of actual reality." (GA 175, *Lecture 4*)

This description of what ought and must be retained in the human heart is tremendously important. The human being must not completely lose the connection between the moral and the natural, idea and actual reality - we can simply say between spirit and nature. So that he does not lose this connection, not only has the Christmas Festival but also the Easter Festival and the Whitsun Festival been 'slotted into the course of the year as legend of the Christ Jesus'. The fact that not many people actually raise this connection to the level of consciousness is not of prime importance, for "human souls perceive this breathing in of the Earth's soul content in their sub-conscious or in clairvoyant impressions as processes of their own soul." (GA 223 *The Cycle of the Year*, 31/3/1923).

We shall later examine the reasons for the fact that the human being always experiences the course of the year subconsciously as well as consciously. But even if the human being knows nothing of this or even does not want to know, the connection between the course of Nature and the Christian year must not be lost.

Before Rudolf Steiner in 1923 expressed the apparent contradiction, he describes the course of the year in all its details in the way the human being experienced it earlier, in the sixth, fifth, fourth millenium before the Mystery of Golgotha. There is no doubt that humanity has grown beyond that, they even had to do so in order to find freedom. The connection with the Earth described in cycle GA 175, also how man came to feel the roundness of the Earth, is referred to when he says: "The human being has not only become personally in himself an ego being, a free being, but the Earth itself has emancipated itself out of cosmic space." With no word does Rudolf Steiner ever suggest that the human being might possibly celebrate the festivals independently of the course of the year. He says to the contrary that as man can no longer find the connection with the spirit outwardly through atavistic forces, "... the human being must more and more seek within himself what he cannot find outside." He then continues: "Science will help in that direction, too." And he shows how science only knows that which the human being is not. That is why people will have to acquire spiritual perception. "Anthroposophy must strive towards this spiritual perception." Then he speaks of establishing a Michael Festival in the autumn. We shall see that especially the Michaelic is connected with the combined viewing of the spirit and nature.

We have shown then that there is actually no contradiction between what Rudolf Steiner says in 1917 and in 1923. The human being is - to a certain extent - emancipated, for he has become related to the Earth. But in the external world he can no longer discover the connection between spirit and nature. He must find it again inwardly through Spiritual Science. So that the connection is not lost, however, before it is consciously recognised through the new clairvoyance, he ought to and must celebrate the festivals in harmony with the course of the year. That guarantees the connection between spirit and nature in his heart. That is why Christmas must be celebrated in the winter, Easter in the spring and St John's in the summer.

## SPIRIT AND NATURE

"Everything material is an arrangement of the spiritual."

*Christian Morgenstern in 'Stufen'.*

The whole of Anthroposophy is really a description of the living and inseparable connection between spirit and nature. So we can remain brief here. Kant presupposed behind the world of appearance 'a thing in itself', unattainable by the human spirit.

"For the anthroposophical spiritual scientist, this search for the 'thing in itself' lying behind the phenomena - I am not speaking of philosophical hypotheses, but of this natural-scientific way of thinking - is comparable to the attempt of looking behind the mirror in order to see where the origin of the pictures one sees in it. It is as though, in order to find out how these pictures came out of the mirror, we went behind the mirror to see where the origin of these pictures was. But the origin of these pictures is not behind the mirror at all! The origin of the images is in front of the mirror - where we are already! We are right in the area where these pictures come from and we would fall prey to an incredible illusion if we believed we had to put our hand behind the mirror in order to find something there from which these pictures originated. However grotesque, however paradoxical it may sound, the natural scientific way of thinking rests on the illusion of having to put one's hand behind the mirror! The 'thing in itself' lies behind the mirror, according to this illusion. But in reality, it does not lie there at all.

"Why is this so? It is so because as human beings, we stand amidst not only an external, material world behind which lies a 'thing in itself', but also right in the middle of everything which is the foundation of this world, only we are not aware of it. We stand right in the middle of it!" (*GA 73 Anthroposophy and Psychology, 12/1/1917*).

Once we have acquired an understanding of the living connection between spirit and nature through Anthroposophy, we must shape our consciousness of it into a culture-forming element: "That which is needed is this: not to distinguish in future between things material and things spiritual in an abstract fashion, but to search for the spiritual in the material itself, so that one could describe the material together with the spiritual, and in the spiritual one could see the transition to the material, and recognize the way it works in the material. .... This will be Michael-culture."

(*GA 194 The Mission of the Archangel Michael, 30/11/1919*).

Let me quote two more passages from the year 1924, the last of Rudolf Steiner's activity as a lecturer, in which much of what he said refers to the Michael-impulse.

"Thus Raymond of Sabunda still taught, even in the 15th century, that the Book of Revelation exists for sinful man because he is no longer able to read in the Book of Nature. And in the way he taught these things, we can already perceive his idea that man must find once more the power to read in the great Book of Nature. This is the impulse of Michael. Now that the Intelligence administered by him has come down to

men, it his impulse to lead men again to the point where they will read once more in the Book of Nature. The great Book of Nature will be opened again. Men will read once more in the Book of Nature." (GA 237 *Karmic Relationships Vol 3, 1/8/1924*).

".... Then one can plunge into the higher world with the knowledge of nature one has acquired, and that which one has acquired as knowledge of nature surfaces towards one out of the higher world; while reading again that which is inscribed into the astral light, it surfaces towards one in spiritual reality. And all that one carries upward into a spiritual world - the knowledge of nature one has acquired here, or the creations of naturalistic art, or the feelings of religion working in the soul in a naturalistic way (for at the bottom of it even religion has become naturalistic) - in carrying all this upwards, one meets in fact, if one develops the ability for it, Michael."

Already in the chapter 'Christ and the Earth', we have awoken to the fact that it is Christ who spiritualizes the life of nature, that He is the spiritual life of nature. Therefore, it is of the utmost importance for a conscious Christian to learn to see how spirit and nature are connected.

What is essential for the future, Rudolf Steiner has characterized in the following words: "We must learn to break through the abstract conception of nature. Our Christianity must be expanded and interpenetrated by a healthy paganism. Nature must once again mean something to us. That is the strange thing about the development of mankind in this part of the fifth post-Atlantean period which has elapsed so far, that we have become more and more indifferent towards nature. We couldn't care less about it. Oh yes, people still have a feeling for nature, they like being outside, they also have an artistic, aesthetic feeling for nature. But they cannot rouse themselves to really experience the inmost living essence of nature in such a way that nature speaks to them just as man speaks to man. But this is necessary if intuition should once more gain entrance into human life. Before all these three periods (the 5th, 6th and 7th post-Atlantean periods) of which we are speaking have elapsed, man must develop a kind of personal relationship with all the details through which he is connected with nature, in order to develop in a healthy way." (GA 190 *The Social Question as a Problem of Soul Life, 29/3/1919*).

In '*The Cycle of the Year*', he expresses it thus: "Men must learn once again to 'think together' the spiritual with the course of nature." (GA 223, 1/4/1923).

## NATURAL NECESSITY AND FREEDOM

If man, as Rudolf Steiner says, "must not delay in getting in tune with the cycle of the year", because "through this tuning into the cycle of the year something should and must be retained in the human soul life", how is it then with human freedom? Nowadays there are people everywhere who have to work at night and sleep during the day. Why then shouldn't we be able to celebrate Christmas in Spring, Summer or Autumn, if for some reason this should appear to be practical to us? Can't one remember an important event anytime and celebrate this event when one chooses?

Never before was freedom so much talked about as in our days - but do we really know yet what freedom is? Each child knows today what is compulsion, suppression, exploitation, etc. There are already strikes and demands at school these days. I suppose kindergartens will follow suit soon. It is a true statement to say: There was never a time when it was so necessary and absolutely essential to come to grips with the meaning of the idea of freedom.

There is a way of looking at life which is called 'Pessimism', which believes that man could never attain to the perfect and good in life because he is compelled by nature to predetermined actions. In the 'eighties of the last century, Rudolf Steiner as a young man met a representative of this school of thinking in Vienna: Maria Eugenie delle Grazie. C. S. Picht has told us about this meeting in 'Gaa-Sophia' Vol 1 (1926). We read: "Whoever even only tentatively recognizes the greatness of Rudolf Steiner must see as a focal point the clash of two opposite world conceptions out of which evolved the world-embracing work of Anthroposophy, in his small essay 'Nature and our Ideals', which he wrote in the year 1886, motivated by the poem 'Nature' by Maria Eugenie delle Grazie. Of this he had only a few copies printed. 'In delle Grazie's poem, which praises nature as the highest power, but so that she sneers at everything ideal which she only creates in order to beguile man, and which she throws back into oblivion when this beguilement has been achieved.' (words by Rudolf Steiner in 'The Course of My Life'), a pessimism of crushing primal force is expressed."

Here is the beginning of the said poem 'Nature': "Nature who created you ties you fast and chains you with iron bands to dust and decay; nature the enticing monster, at one time smiling and sun-golden spurring you on to feverish enjoyment of life, then again bursting forth horror and anguish, flogging you with the whip of misery and despair, forever destructive, and mysterious, Medusa and Sphinx in one. ....".

This is Rudolf Steiner's reply to this: "This freedom, one might say, is only a dream; in deeming ourselves to be free, we obey the iron necessity of nature. The mightiest thoughts we think are only the result of nature working in us blindly. Oh, if only we could admit at last that a being which recognizes itself cannot be unfree! In investigating the eternal laws of nature we distil that substance out of her which lies at the bottom of all her influences. We see the web of laws which governs things and which creates natural necessity. Our very act of recognizing gives us the power to distil

the eternal laws out of things natural. Should we then be the slaves of her laws without a will of our own? Things natural are unfree because they do not recognize the laws that govern them, because they are ruled by them without knowing about them. Who should force them onto us since we penetrate them with our spirit? A cognizing being cannot be unfree. He changes laws into ideals and then gives these as laws to himself." (*From 'Nature and our Ideals, letter to the poetess Marie E. delle Grazie'*).

Rudolf Steiner saw in this letter the basic cell of his *'Philosophy of Freedom'* (1894).

But his point of view had a very essential prerequisite: a unified view of nature. This alone is the reason why Rudolf Steiner venerated Haeckel, who was everything else but a spiritually-minded person. Haeckel was a monist and Rudolf Steiner saw a way to freedom through Monism. Already in 1892, well before the publication of his *Philosophy of Freedom* he wrote an essay with the title *'The Monistic View of Nature and Limits of Cognition'* (GA 30). This closes with the statement: "Monism as a science is the basis for true freedom of action, and our development can only take this course: through Monism to the philosophy of freedom!"

Rudolf Steiner has emphasised this unified view of the world over and over again; one could collect quotes of it from every year of his teaching life. We will restrict ourselves to two examples: "When we contemplate nature in her many-hued multiplicity of light and colours, of sounds, and all her other phenomena appealing to our senses, then we perceive simultaneously something spiritual as well as material, inseparably connected one with the other." (GA 73 *Anthroposophy and Psychology*, 15/10/1918).

In 1920 he says in *'Limits of Nature-cognition'* (GA 322): "While we have sense-impressions, only that comes to our consciousness at first which is the outer sound, the outer colour. But by surrendering ourselves to these, what works on us is not that of which modern physicists and physiologists dream, namely ether movements, movements of atoms and the like, but what works on us is spirit. Those forces work on us which only here amid physical nature between birth and death shape us into true human beings. And when we start off along such paths of cognition as I have described to you, we become aware of how we are organised and formed from out of the outer world. We discern consciously what lives in us and forms us, when we realise fully and clearly that the outer world is interpenetrated by the spirit."

In 1916, Rudolf Steiner gave a most important lecture cycle entitled: *'Natural Necessity and Freedom in World Events and in Human Actions'*. In it, one can find all the elements for a healthy judgement of this question. The cycle culminates thus: "Greatest freedom is achieved when one does that which is a world historical necessity" (GA 166, 1/2/1916).

The Mystery of Golgotha was a world historical necessity in order that Earth and man should find their right paths of development. Christ acted in the most complete freedom that was ever achieved.



All this has vast and far-reaching consequences for the way we stand in the world: "I have already told you that Neo-Platonism has taken Christ right into the human interior. That has remained the custom right until now. By penetrating the exterior world we have to think of Christ as also connected with the outside world; that means, we have to incorporate Him right into the evolution of the outside world." (*GA 325 Natural Science and the Historical Development of Humanity*, 24/5/1921).

And so the study of natural necessity and freedom once again leads us to the realisation: Christ is the spiritual life of nature.

## SPIRITUAL COMMUNION

A thorough investigation of the idea of freedom makes one realize that freedom is a precious, indeed a sacred possession. It is not achieved on the noisy street or by spectacular deeds, but only in the most hidden and sacred recesses of the soul.

The 'organ of freedom' in the human being is the ego. Man can only attain to freedom by becoming capable of making mistakes. Thereby he takes unto himself a unique mission in the universe. "Thus only do we grasp the whole dignity and significance of man as a member of our hierarchies, that we say to ourselves in looking up to the magnificence and the greatness of the higher hierarchies: They are so great and wise and good that they can never err from the right path. But man can, and it is his mission to thereby bring freedom into the world, and through freedom that which one can call in the truest sense of the word, love. For without freedom, love is impossible!" (*GA 110 The Spiritual Hierarchies and their Reflection in the Physical World, 18/4/1909*).

Therefore, only the ego which has attained to true independence can be a bearer of true love. But that also means that we can never be truly free as regards the physical body, the ether body and the astral body, only in that degree inasmuch as the ego can radiate into them. Our physical organization, however, is in the service of the ego, really. Through the physical body the ego finds out about the world, which it needs to do in order to be able to perfect itself. "But finding the ego in the centre of our soul-being also means that we enter into an intimate relationship with the Christ. That which has its being through Christ is intimately bound up with our ego and so is a very intimate part of our being." (*GA 176 The Karma of Materialism, 28/8/1917*).

The Christ-initiates called the 'I am' the name of Christ Jesus. (*GA 103 The Gospel of St John, 20/5/1908*). St Paul says: "Not I, but Christ in me!". If we found Christ to be the spiritual life of nature when we looked outside, we now find him in the most intimate recesses of our soul. This was still known in early Christianity. One expressed it thus: Christ is Dionysos and Apollo at the same time. You can see this today in the mosaics of Ravenna. (*Read: Ernst Uehli 'The Mosaics of Ravenna', and Hella Krause-Zimmer 'The Twofold Christ-image'*).

When a dim idea dawns on us of how in the centre of our being the 'outer' and the 'inner' can become one, we stand before the primal mystery of human existence. The more one gets to know the life-work of Rudolf Steiner, the more one realizes that this primal mystery is revealed in it step by step, with ever greater clarity. Quite early, in the 'Introduction to Goethe's Scientific Works', we find the statement: "The becoming aware of the idea in the real world is the true communion of the human being." (*GA 1 Goethe the Scientist*). Thinking is here taken to be an organ of perception. Thinking stands in the same relationship to ideas as the eye does to the light and the ear to sound. So it 'sees' the idea in the real world, and this 'seeing' becomes a religious experience for it.

This is basically the same kind of 'seeing' with which one can realize that: "Within this Spirit of the Earth all that becomes visible, of which I have told you in detail as regards the impulse of Golgotha, for there one finds the vitalizing force which was not in the Earth before the Mystery of Golgotha. In it one feels securely enfolded by the Spirit which has gone through the Mystery of Golgotha. And thereby one becomes convinced that this Spirit has truly flowed into the Earth through the Mystery of Golgotha." (GA 157 *Etheric Man Within Physical Man*, 20/4/1915).

That which was 'seen' as idea in the real world - now it is recognized in its personification, for "the Spirit of the Earth is truly as personal a Being as we are ourselves", a being which lives out its life in the changing conditions of winter and summer, waking and sleeping, "because for this Being a year is a day."

Between the bold statement of 'the true communion of man' and this assertion lies a thorny path. In 'hard soul battles' which he shares with us in his *'The Course of my Life'*, Rudolf Steiner lights his way through to the deepest mysteries of Christianity. "For my soul development everything depended on having stood before the Mystery of Golgotha in the deepest, most solemn celebration of recognition." In 1915, he can add to this profoundly significant statement the following: "And so it can not be any other way than that for the man of today the occult contemplation of the world takes on a touch of the religious sinking into that which streams through and spiritualizes the world as the divine. That is the reason why true knowledge of the spiritual world will never diminish religious feeling, but indeed deepen it." (GA 157, 20/4/1915).

In 1918, Rudolf Steiner formulates this still more precisely: "The Mystery of Golgotha must not only be mentioned in history books, but a knowledge is needed of the fact that since the Mystery of Golgotha, natural phenomena must be regarded in such a way that one realizes: Christ is on the Earth, whereas before, he was not on the Earth. A true Christian natural science will not search for atoms and their laws, nor for the preservation of matter and its force, but it will search for the revelation of Christ in all natural phenomena, which will thereby become sacramental for man." (GA 184, *Three Streams in the Evolution of Mankind*, 13/10/1918).

In 'The Cycle of the Year', Rudolf Steiner expresses it thus: "When one learns to think with the cycle of the year, then in one's thoughts those forces will mingle which will enable man to hold a dialogue with the divine-spiritual forces which reveal themselves from out of the stars. It is from the stars that human beings have fetched down the strength to found festivals which have inner human validity. Human beings must found festivals from their inner esoteric strength. Then out of their dialogue with fading, with ripening plants, with studying the Earth, by finding the right inner mood of celebration, they will be able once again to hold dialogue with the gods, and to connect human existence with divine existence." (GA 223, 1/4/23)

Now Rudolf Steiner held a lecture cycle during the last days of the year 1922 in Dornach, entitled: 'Man and the World of the Stars'. What is developed in these twelve

lectures culminates in lectures 10 and 12. Rudolf Steiner shows at first how man is placed into the life weaving between Earth and cosmos. Viewed from the inside, the plants are imaginations, picture-thoughts of the Sun. Sleeping man takes intense part in this life weaving between Earth and cosmos:

"In earlier times of human evolution, man felt a very exact difference between sleep in winter and sleep in summer. They also knew what significance sleep in winter and sleep in summer had for them. Men knew in those early times that summer sleep was such that they could say during summer that the Earth is truly woven around with picture thoughts. Men of olden days expressed it thus: during summer, the upper gods descend and hover around the Earth; during winter, the lower gods climb up from out of the Earth and hover around the Earth. One experienced this imaginative world, which is shaped differently during winter and summer, as a weaving of the upper and lower gods. But one also knew during this earlier time of human civilization, that the human being is in this weaving imaginative world with his ego being and with his astrality.

"But this very fact which I have just described to you shows us, when we look at it from the point of view of spiritual science, in what relationship the human being stands with the extra-terrestrial cosmos even during his earth existence. You see, during summer, wherever on earth it may be summer at that time, man is always woven around by a clearly contoured cosmic imagination during sleep. Thereby, he is pressed closely against the Earth during the summer time – so one would say – in his being of soul and spirit. This is quite different during the winter time. During winter time, the contours of these imaginations become wider-meshed, so to say.

"During summer, there are quite distinctly formed imaginations – in the most varied configurations – within which we live during our sleep with our ego being and astral being. During winter, there are wide meshed figurations around the Earth, and that has the result that every time when autumn begins, that which lives in our ego being and in our astral body is carried far out into the world during the night-time. During the hot summer-time, that which lives in our ego and astral body remains more in the spiritual-soul atmosphere of man, so to say. During the winter time, that which lives in our ego being and in our astral being is carried far out into the world spaces."

*(GA 219 Man and the World of the Stars, 1/12/22).*

A thorough discussion of the moral reality follows, which could not be recognized without Anthroposophy at all.

Man must aim once again at a living together with the divine-spiritual world: "The science which spiritualizes the concept of space again and makes it transcendental, and which is called Anthroposophical Spiritual Science, works from below upwards, stretches its hands from below upwards so to speak, in order to grasp the hands of Michael stretched down from above. For that is where the bridge can be built between the gods and men. Michael became regent of this age for the reason that he has to

receive that knowledge which the gods want to receive from men who were able to add the concept of Space to the concept of Time, which the gods do not yet have."  
(GA 219, lecture of 17/12/1922).

Then once again, Rudolf Steiner describes the seasons and their festivals against the background of the old mysteries. The old summer mysteries have been transmuted into the new mid-winter mysteries. Concerning the Christmas festival, he says yet again quite distinctly and clearly: "In accordance with true Christianity, this finding of the spiritual-supersensible reality in man must take place at a time not when he passes out of himself and is given up to the cosmos, but when he is firmly within himself. And this is most of all the case when he is united with the Earth at the time when the Earth herself is shut off from the cosmic expanse - that is to say, in midwinter."  
(GA 219, lecture of 23/12/1922.)

The tenth lecture once again takes up the questioning after nature-necessity and freedom. Natural Science has arrived at the viewpoint, as you know, that freedom is an impossibility, an illusion. Opposing this, Rudolf Steiner shows that freedom has a basis in man in the way in which the different members of his being play into each other rhythmically:

"Already a superficial survey shows that man has comparative freedom as regards the course of the year. But looking at it from an Anthroposophical point of view, this stands out even more clearly. When looking at it anthroposophically, we turn our gaze to the two interchanging conditions in which man lives within twenty-four hours, at the conditions of sleeping and waking. ...

"You see, when you take the Earth: She must have summer and winter simultaneously in her different regions, but you cannot slide these into each other. Within man, summer and winter are continually being pushed one into the other microcosmically. While man sleeps, his physical summer is mixed up with his spiritual winter. During the course of the year, in external nature, man has winter and summer separately; within himself, from two different sides, he continually mixes up winter and summer. ...

"That which appears as a necessity of nature, when spread out separately in the course of time, is pushed together, is neutralized in man. This makes him a free being. Therefore, there will be no understanding of freedom unless man comprehends how, to his physical-etheric nature, in which it can be summer or winter, are added the opposite winters and summers of his spiritual life as a neutralizing factor.

"So you see, when we look at outer nature we conceive pictures which we must not transpose into ourselves, neither in the waking nor in the sleeping condition. We must not transpose them into ourselves, but we must say to ourselves: within human nature these pictures of the course of nature lose their validity, and we must look at something else. And once we learn not to be put out by the course of nature within man, we are enabled to really look clearly at man's spiritual-moral-soul being. We come to an

ethical, moral relationship with man in the same way as we come to a natural relationship with nature." (*GA 219, lecture of 29/12/1922*).

So, within man, the course of time is pushed together and becomes space. By looking at man in this way, our gaze becomes free for the ethical and the moral in their reality. Natural necessity becomes nullified by the weaving into each other of the times. When time becomes space, an inner temple area is created, a space of freedom for the ego in which the cosmic cult can take place. But one has to put this very clearly: not the mere weaving into each other of the seasons - we could call it a marriage of the seasons in Novalis' words - is a cosmic cult. That is only the becoming free of an inner space, of the temple, in which the actual happening can come about. The cosmic cult occurs when man lives together with the course of the year from his own free will, not from necessity.

The course of the world, the rhythmic weaving of the seasons in spring, summer, autumn and winter, with which Christ has united Himself so intensely that He goes through the ascending and descending movements, is spread out in time. That is one of the most important elements for development, the existence of such an ascending and descending life, a sleeping and waking, summer and winter. When man lives consciously with the course of the world from out of the free inner space of his ego, independent from natural necessity, that is cultus. The human willing then becomes artistic creating in 'positive surrender'.

These are Rudolf Steiner's words: "Once one has found within oneself in one's centre the physical, soul and spiritual world forces working together, one also sees them outside in the world spaces. Human willing is raised to artistic creating and finally to such a relationship with the world which is not only passive cognition but a positive surrender which I would like to characterize in these words: Man does not any more look into the world in an abstract fashion with the forces of his head, but he begins to see into it more and more with his whole being. And the living together with the course of the world becomes a cultus for him, and the cosmic cult results, in which man can stand in each moment of his life. Each earthly cult is a copy of this cosmic cult. This cosmic cult is higher than any earthly cult." (*GA 219, lecture of 29/12/1922*).

These thoughts are deepened in lecture 12. The place in man where the times are pushed together and become space, is now understood to be that point in the rhythmic system where the nerve-sense system and the metabolic-limb system are striving to find their equilibrium. "Man is a piece of nature within himself, but because the forces of nature oppose each other in the human organization, they cancel each other out and man is such that he is hardly nature at all. That is what makes man a free being. One must not apply the laws of natural necessity to him, for there is simply not one natural necessity, but two, which get their information from opposite directions, and which cancel each other out within the human being. Within this area of neutralized natural forces is located the spiritual-soul being of man, uninfluenced by natural forces, and must be recognized from out of its own laws."

"And when we come to apply the methods of Spiritual Science to the cycle of the year, we find in it too a spiritual summer condition belonging to its winter, and a spiritual winter condition belonging to its summer. These conditions do not, however, balance one another as they do in man. On the contrary, they express themselves in opposite hemispheres, so that on the Earth, physical winter is strengthened by the winter of the soul and spirit, and physical summer by spiritual summer."

In outer nature we see something which Rudolf Steiner calls 'the monuments of something which has formerly created and shaped life, but now is dying'. That is the past. In man, too, this past lives, in so far as he is a physical-etheric being. But our physical-etheric organization is penetrated by forces of the future which live in our astral and ego being. So within man there is a condition of equilibrium within which he can unfold his imaginative and thought life freely.

"When we look into nature, that part of her which is mineral and vegetable, we only see the past. But that within man which already functions as future during man's present, that gives him the condition of freedom. This condition of freedom does not exist in outer nature. If outer nature was doomed to stay as she is through her mineral and vegetable kingdoms, she would be doomed to die just as the physical and etheric organism of man dies in the world all. .... If therefore nature should not die, then that must be given to her which man has in his astral and ego bodies. .... Just as man hopes for reincarnation in his next earth life from that which is transcendental and invisible in him, but cannot hope for it from his dying physical-etheric bodies, so a future earth cannot result from that which surrounds us as the mineral-vegetable earth. The only thing that will give the earth a future existence is that which we can put into her and which she does not have yet. That which does not exist in her are the active thoughts of man which live and weave freely in the condition of equilibrium within his natural organization. By making these independent thoughts real, he gives future to the earth."

Here Rudolf Steiner continues what he has stated so boldly as a young man in his 'Introductions': "Of these creative thoughts I was able to say once in my little book about the Goethean cognitional theory: This kind of thinking is in fact the spiritual form of communion for mankind." (For the sake of exactness, I would mention that the words about the true communion are not in the book 'Theory of Cognition', but in the 'Introductions'.) "... By enlivening his own thoughts, man unites himself with the divine-spiritual, which penetrates the world and ensures its future, and thereby celebrates communion, receives communion. And so spiritual cognition is a true communion, the beginning of a cult which befits present-day humanity." (GA 219, lecture of 31/12/1922).

# LIVING TOGETHER WITH THE COURSE OF THE YEAR

To start with, let us look once more at the 'spiritual communion'. One has to understand quite clearly that what Rudolf Steiner gave us there as a formula is only the beginning of something which was probably much more broadly conceived. He said: "I will write down for you a first formula. .... That is the first beginning of what must happen if Anthroposophy is to accomplish its mission in the world. .... I wanted to tell you this to start with as a beginning. I shall continue next Friday."

This was said on that tragic New Year's Eve full of destiny on which the first Goetheanum burnt down. With superhuman strength and unparalleled fidelity, Rudolf Steiner immediately after the fire resumed his work and even the lecture course. But the 'cosmic cult' remained a fragment. That is one thing that should be borne in mind.

The other is that the cancelling out of nature resulting from the interweaving of the seasons within the human being, as well as the state of equilibrium between the members of this being, can only be relative, of course. In the lecture of 29/12/1922 we find: "Already on looking at it superficially one sees that the human being is relatively free regarding the course of the year." (*GA 219 Man and the World of the Stars*).

"For it is indeed the case for example that the celebration of Christmas is as it were a token of remembrance to show that the human being has an etheric elemental nature, has an etheric body through which he is connected with the elemental in nature." (*GA 169 The Festivals and their Meaning, 6/6/1916*).

Here an important methodical basis must be observed: No sound judgement in any spiritual-scientific question of special import is obtained by relying upon one or a few statements of Rudolf Steiner's. One must always ask: What standing has this statement in the total work of the spiritual researcher? For this position in the total work confers on the statement a positional value. Without a basic knowledge of this 'positional value', one comes only to partial knowledge.

In the connection under discussion is indicated a straight line leading from the statements about the spiritual communion through the cycles *GA 220*, *GA 221 (Earthly Knowledge and Heavenly Wisdom)* to *GA 223 (The Cycle of the Year)*, which then in the Autumn of the year 1923 flows into the lectures about the living together with the course of the year in four cosmic imaginations (*GA 229*). Observation of this lecture series as a whole shows quite clearly that in no way is the activity of nature cancelled out for the human being in an absolute sense, but that Man should turn to nature again from out of the consciousness of his freedom.

We must remember that the ego is the true seat of freedom. Freedom can work into the various members of our being only to the extent to which the ego can already send



strength through them. We shall see what high tasks for the future our living with and experiencing of the course of the year has, practised consciously out of the inner realm of freedom of our ego.

Firstly, however, let us glance back at the meeting with the Son-God. There, Rudolf Steiner has said that by binding the festival cycle to the course of nature, something shall and must be preserved in the hearts and souls of human beings.

Now Rudolf Steiner during the Michael season at Vienna (what city would indeed be more suitable for the theme?) gave the cycle on '*Michaelmas and the Soul Forces of Man (Anthroposophy and the Human Gemut)*' (GA 223). Therein he describes in detail that the festivals of the year must be "experiences of the heart", so that the course of the year can be experienced "as a reality". In the lecture of 1/10/1923 there is again a description of the course of the year with convincing reasons showing that the festivals must be joined to the course of nature. In considering the question of emancipation we find there the passage:

"The human being today is little inclined to observe this inbreathing and outbreathing of the Earth. Human breathing is more of a physical process; Earth breathing is a spiritual process, is a striding out into cosmic spaces of the Earth's elemental entities, and a sinking of these entities into the Earth again. But truly, just as man experiences as his inner attitude to life what goes on in his blood circulation, so he also experiences the course of the year as a fully human being. Just as the blood circulation is a decisive factor for human existence, so - in a wider sense - is the circulation of the elemental entities from the earth to the sky and back again to the earth deeply significant for the life of humanity. And only the coarseness of their perception prevents present-day people from feeling any longer how great a part of themselves truly depends on this outer course of the year. ....

"And one will learn to really experience the course of the year just as we experience the utterances of a living, soul-filled being. Indeed, through true anthroposophical study one can bring the heart and mind to the point where the course of the year becomes so speaking and real to one that one feels these utterances of the course of the year to be like the comforting or harsh communications of a close friend. As from the words of a close friend, from his gestures, one can feel the warm pulse-beat of an ensouled being, which certainly speaks to one differently from something lifeless, soulless, so nature, dumb at first, will begin to speak as an ensouled being to humanity. ....

"But this must become more and more part of the humanity of the near future, and anthroposophists must be the pioneers of this experience, to live together with the course of the year, to be able to live with the spring, to die with the autumn.

"Michael powers - now one perceives them again! From quite different presuppositions did the picture of Michael fighting the dragon arise in times of old instinctive clairvoyance. Now, however, in that we comprehend in full vitality: nature consciousness, self consciousness; spring, summer, autumn, winter-time, there arises

again at the end of September before man the same power that makes him realize what, just when one participates in the death of nature, shall evolve out of this grave as victorious power - which in the inward part of the human being kindles to radiance the true, strong self consciousness. ...

“It is only the living Spirit who speaks to us in nature, who can draw into the human heart and mind, enlivening and elevating it. Then this human heart will gain from such knowledge which has been transmuted within the heart, those forces for earth existence which mankind needs so badly for social life.”

On his return to Dornach, Rudolf Steiner gave the four lectures on *'The Four Seasons and the Archangels - Experience of the Course of the Year in four Cosmic Imaginations'* (GA 229).

In the first lecture he refers to the Vienna lectures: "When the sun strikes on some earth region or other it calls forth there by warming it, by radiating onto it, something which man then experiences. And when people absorb Anthroposophy in the right way, do not read it like some thriller, but read it in such a way that what is communicated to them in Anthroposophy becomes the content of their soul, then they thereby train their heart and soul by degrees to live together with what takes place out there in the course of the year."

But he had already given to us more than ten years before, the instrument which can open up to the soul the course of the year in this manner, *The Calendar of the Soul*.

What actual meaning has this living together with the course of the year? Rudolf Steiner stated it thus in the second edition (1918) of the *Calendar of the Soul*: "The course of the year has a life of its own. The human soul can feel and live together with this life. If people allow that which speaks to them differently week by week of the life of the year to work on them, then through such living together they will truly find themselves at last. They will feel how forces flow from it which strengthen them from within outwards. They will notice that such forces will be aroused in them by participating in the meaning of the course of the world such as it unfolds itself in the succession of time. They will then become aware of the delicate but significant threads connecting them with the world into which they have been born."

But the *Calendar of the Soul* contains yet another secret. Emil Bock has disclosed this with deep insight in a lecture on the poetic work within the course of Rudolf Steiner's life. He tells us regarding the Calendar of the Soul: "It certainly does not intend merely to embellish the course of the year with its verses. What is its real meaning? It is that a connection is established with a great mystery: In going through the course of the year, through the polarities of summer and winter, humanity arrives at similar stations which the soul has to traverse also on the inner path. Instead of simply going along prescribed inner paths step by step, we can add to this corresponding with it, the soul's living together with the course of the year; and there appears in great style, presented by nature herself, the possibility to add to the ultimate teacher-pupil relationship an esoteric

occultism, a meditative sphere of life which is accessible to anyone, in which everyone is his own hierophant, his own occult teacher, so long as he makes the right use of that which is offered to him here. Behind the humble act of connecting oneself with the metamorphoses of earth nature during the cycle of the year, is hidden a thing of unprecedented magnitude. When Rudolf Steiner was asked once by what means the soul could prepare itself most effectively for experiencing the Etheric Christ, he answered: 'By meditatively living together with the cycle of the year. The mysteries of the seasons are the gift of nature for the meditating human being seeking the Christ sphere.'" (Emil Bock, *'Rudolf Steiner - Studies of his Life and Works'* Stuttgart, 1961)

After what has been so far described there can be no further question but that the *Calendar of the Soul* should be meditated in the southern hemisphere in accord with the course of nature too. There are direct instructions for this by Rudolf Steiner. Fred Poeppig relates in his recollected memoirs (*Adventures of My Life, Novalis Verlag, 1975*): "I asked him (Rudolf Steiner), whether the exercises that he has specified in his books can be carried out in other parts of the Earth, in conditions different from the European, for example in South America? 'Certainly', he replied, 'only the weekly verses of the Calendar of the Soul must be switched around, that is, they must be used according to the rhythms of the seasons at that locality. Otherwise everything can be handled just as I described.' "

Miss Emma Zucick brought back the same advice for Rio de Janeiro from her journey to Dornach.

But how is it then with the festivals of the year? It is well known that in the southern hemisphere the traditional Christian churches celebrate the festivals of the year on the dates of the northern hemisphere, whereby Christmas then falls in summer and St John's in winter. We must now occupy ourselves in greater detail with the meaning of the festivals of the year. For we have contemplated them so far as 'the legend of Christ Jesus' which is inscribed into the course of nature.

## THE FESTIVALS IN THE COURSE OF THE YEAR

Anyone who wants to know today on what day Christmas falls, or what the date of Easter is, consults the calendar. The nations have their remembrance days. They too, are to be found in the calendar. If we want to know when the sun rises, when it is full moon or new moon, when eclipses or special positions of the stars take place, the date of the commencement of spring, summer, autumn and winter, all those things are recorded in a good calendar.

Today the calendar has a world-embracing value. Even peoples who have kept to their own system of chronology conform to a universally uniform calendar when communicating with others. Also in order to make possible a complete uniformity there has been laid down a date line to which - according to whether the traveller goes east or west - one day of the whole calculation must be added or subtracted. The fascination that this universally uniform arrangement of the calendar exercises is so great, that for many years now uniformity too within this arrangement has been striven for. To that belongs especially the demand for establishing the Easter festival on a set date. The calendar which has become so powerful conceals something like an ahrimanic temptation. It can lead to the erroneous opinion that there might be a causal connection between the arrangement of the calendar and the circle of the festivals. The confusion of the festivals of the year with the days commemorated on the calendar however could only arise because for example at Easter one no longer lifts one's eyes to the heavens to orientate oneself according to the position of sun and moon, for one can see it in the calendar. Who will still look up to the heavens when he wants to know what the phase of the moon is at any moment? You can find it in the calendar!

The movements of the stars are naturally the basis of all calculations of the calendar. The sun completes ever and again, truly and exactly, its 'prescribed journey'. But what do these exact movements tell us? They speak to us of the past. Looking up to the physical heavens we see a 'memory picture': "For clairvoyant consciousness it is always the case that we know directly: everything that appears to us there is really something past, it is something that was completely alive in the past; but at the present time it does not appear to us really in its original living form, but - comparably - like a snail shell from which the snail has departed. The whole physical system of heavenly bodies is a testimony to nothing but past times, to past occurrences." (*GA 158 Man's Connection with the Elemental World, lecture of 11/4/1912*).

The comparison with the snail shell from which the snail has departed is profoundly true; for, as nature today demonstrates itself to the immediate gaze, she is the 'divinely produced work of the divine', an 'image of the divine creativity'. Thus we stand in a 'work-created world'. The ahrimanic powers would like to hold us fast in the purely work-created world. But Christ entered into this world of ours with: "... an intellectuality that is completely the same as it was when it was still forming the cosmos in its being. If we speak today in such a way that our thoughts can be those of the Christ, then we are opposing something to the ahrimanic powers that protects us from

falling a prey to them. In order that our human connection with the original divine-spiritual may remain such that we understand how to speak about the cosmos in Christ's speech, we must in sincere inner feeling make ourselves thoroughly conversant with what Michael and his hosts bring among us with their deeds, with their mission.

"Michael is filled with the striving - working through his example in perfect freedom - to embody in human cosmic evolution the relation to the cosmos which is still preserved in man himself from the ages when the divine being and the divine manifestation held sway. In this way, all that is said by the modern view of nature - relating as it does purely to the image, purely to the form of the divine - will merge into a higher, spiritual view of Nature." (from *GA 26, Anthroposophical Leading Thoughts - Leading Thoughts 112, 113 and 114*).

A calendar in the sense of today is after all only possible since the gods have withdrawn from direct working into earthly relationships. The festivals of the year, however, originated from the practices of the ancient Mysteries. In these old Mysteries were guarded secrets from a time in which the gods were accessible in their real being, or indeed at least were being revealed to men.

"Through the right attitude to Christ, humanity will experience in living communication with Christ what otherwise could only be received as traditional religious revelation. The inner world of soul experience will be able to be experienced as illuminated with spirit light, as external nature will be experienced as supported by spirit. .... Moreover, in so doing he provides against the allurements of Ahriman. For the path of the spirit into external nature, which Michael inspires, leads to a right relation to the domain of Ahriman, inasmuch as a true and living experience with Christ is also found thereby." (*Leading Thought 117*). "Through Michael, man will find the path into the supersensible world in the right way with respect to the outer world of nature." (*GA 26 Anthroposophical Leading Thoughts, The Michael-Christ Experience of Man*).

"What man experiences through his environment which is but the accomplished work of the divine and spiritual, must take effect on his spiritual nature (i.e. his ego) only. His physical and etheric organization must only be affected by that which flows on, in the stream of evolution, not in his outer environment, but within his own being, and which had its origin in the being and manifestation of the divine-spiritual. But this must not work together with that in the human being which lives in the element of freedom.

"All this is only made possible because Michael carries over from the far past of evolution something that brings man into connection with that divine-spiritual reality which in the present day no longer penetrates the physical and etheric organization." (*GA 26 Anthroposophical Leading Thoughts, Michael's Mission in the Cosmic Age of Human Freedom*).

What does that tell us about the character of the festivals of the year? The festivals were once 'festivals of the giving by the divine to earth people'; humanity formerly received directly the gifts of the heavenly powers in the festivals. The festivals were

never commemoration days on the calendar. They were actual occurrences, for humanity truly received divine gifts during the festivals. (*GA 223 The Cycle of the Year, lecture of 8/4/1923*).

That is completely evident from the way they were established:

"By the initiates of the first centuries, the birth of the historic Jesus was set in externally the darkest time of the year, because through him the Spiritual Sun had risen."

(*GA 97, lecture of 2/12/1906*).

"The Christmas festival was established from occult truths, not from historical facts."

(*GA 159/160 The Effects of the Christ Impulse on the Historical Course of Evolution, lecture of 7/5/1915*).

With the Easter festival the notable fact is before us, of which we only have reliable information through Rudolf Steiner, that the Death on the Cross took place on the 3rd of April in the year 33. But he stressed ever and again that the Easter festival must never be fixed on a certain calendar date. Naturally, everything connected with the earthly life of Christ has come to pass once on the physical plane, that is the customary historical interpretation. Through the Resurrection, however, after the passage through the physical sphere, the centre of gravity of Christ Jesus was transferred up to the etheric sphere, where Paul as one 'prematurely born' could then perceive Him. It would be disastrous if we had to rely on historical documents for our security of faith:

"People often ask: How can I find a relationship to Christ? Certainly it is a question that is justified. But anyone with insight will know that it is a question that cannot be answered just like that. Let me make a comparison: we see objects by means of our eyes, but the eyes we do not see. For the eyes to be able to see, they must be unable to see themselves. That which does the seeing cannot itself be seen. Since the Mystery of Golgotha, man must see the spiritual world through the impulse coming from Christ, just as he sees external colours through his eyes. We do not see the eyes through which the colours, etc are seen, nor do we see the Christ impulse through which we see the spiritual world. This is why the Mystery of Golgotha is veiled in mystery, and the history of the event is also veiled. Since the Mystery of Golgotha, the historical event associated with it cannot be discovered by historic means. To seek for Christ historically like any other event in history would be like trying to induce the eye to see itself. It is inherent in the Mystery of Golgotha that Christ Jesus cannot be found like Plato, Socrates or any other historical personality, through historical documents. It lies in its very nature that accounts of it are not historical, they were given by human beings who were inspired. Accounts of the Mystery of Golgotha can always be proved not to be historical records in the usual sense. We would become spiritually ill in the course of human evolution in the moment it became possible to include the Mystery of Golgotha among other historical events. Nor in that case would we be able to see it rightly; if we saw it historically it would be like an injured eye seeing itself. A healthy eye sees objects, but not itself. If a splinter has become embedded in the eye, it will see a dark space before it and begin to perceive itself; but that is abnormal perception. Similarly. an abnormal perception of the Mystery of Golgotha would come about if it did not have

an aspect which externally is imperceptible and therefore enables man to perceive spiritually. This is a secret connected with the Mystery of Golgotha."  
(GA 176 *The Karma of Materialism, lecture of 14/8/1917*).

What, then, are the festivals supposed to be today? "If the festivals were formerly festivals of giving by the divine to the earthly, if humanity formerly received directly the gifts of the heavenly powers during the festivals, so today, when humanity has the capacities within itself, the metamorphosis of the festival-thought consists in their being festivals of remembrance. In them man inscribes into his soul what he is to consummate within himself." (GA 223 *The Cycle of the Year, lecture of 8/4/1923*).

Here the word 'remembrance' is not used in the usual superficial sense, in that one calls up again what has slipped from one's memory, but as 're-membering' in the sense of inwardly making it part of oneself again; precisely that man inscribes into his soul what he has to accomplish in himself. The festivals are therefore not days of remembrance in the ordinary sense that would indeed have nothing to do with nature. That becomes quite clear in the immediately following sentence of the lecture. There, Rudolf Steiner speaks of the Michael festival, that must be celebrated in autumn:

".... for at that time the whole of Nature speaks a cosmic speech laden with meaning. .... Nature, which throughout spring and summer has helped man by its activity, nature, which has worked in man during spring and summer, herself withdraws. Man is thrown back on himself. What must now awaken when nature forsakes him is courage of the soul. Once more we are shown how what we can conceive as a Michael festival must be a festival of soul-courage, of soul-strength, of soul activity.

"This is what will gradually give to the festival thought the character of remembrance, qualities already suggested in a monumental saying by which it was indicated that for all future time what previously had been festivals of gifts will become, or should become, festivals of remembrance. These monumental words, which must be the basis of all festival thoughts, also for those which will arise again - this monumental saying is: 'This do in remembrance of Me.' That is the festival thought which is turned towards the remembrance aspect.

"Just as the other thought that lies in the Christ-Impulse must continue to act livingly, must re-form itself and not be allowed to remain simply a dead product to which one looks back, so must this thought also work on further, kindling perceptive feeling and thought, and we must understand that the festivals must continue in spite of the fact that man is changing, but that because of this the festivals also must undergo metamorphoses." (GA 223 *The Cycle of the Year, lecture of 8/4/1923*).

That harmonises with what Rudolf Steiner expressed in the Easter Imagination: "The Mystery of Golgotha did not occur only as a unique event. True, it had to be placed as an unrepeatable event on the Earth; but this event, this Mystery of Golgotha, is renewed each year in a certain way for men." (GA 229 *The Four Seasons and the Archangels, lecture of 7/10/1923*).

On 23 May 1923, Rudolf Steiner gave the well-known lecture on '*Creating a Michael Festival out of the Spirit*'. It is especially evident in it that the Michael festival is a kind of touchstone for adopting afresh the essence of the festivals of the year:

"He who penetrates the secrets of this Earth cycle in the course of the year knows that the power of Michael now comes down through the forces of Nature, which it did not do in earlier centuries; so that we can brave the autumn shedding its leaves by perceiving the approach of the Michael power from the clouds down to the earth.

I have been granted many opportunities to speak to you of the Christmas festival, the Easter festival, that is to say on all the ancient festivals. It is beautiful to draw the spirit of the old festivals out of the past ages. But I would like to think that people did not only understand what ancient wisdom has thought, when it has been brought to the surface by Anthroposophy, but I would like people also to be able to understand what demands the spirit of the immediate present makes on us. It does not suffice simply to look upon the Gospels as the expression of Christianity, for Christ said: 'I am with you always, even unto the end of the world'. He is here! If we understand His Spirit, His words, then we can speak every day out of this Spirit. What has caused the ancients to create out of a cosmic wisdom, what has caused us today still to reveal the deep meaning of the festivals, lives among us now! We want to be whole people, don't we? But then we must also be able to create spiritually as whole human beings. Then we must not only be able to meditate on the meaning of the ancient festivals, but we must ourselves be able to become socially creative, so that we can create festivals out of the course of the year.

That to be sure demands more of people than explaining the old established festivals. But it is true Anthroposophy, high Anthroposophy. And the Anthroposophical Society can indeed be tested by whether it understands only dead Anthroposophy that talks about the past, or whether it also understands living Anthroposophy." (*GA 224, The Festivals and Their Meaning*).

The lectures of the year 1923, that speak of the new Michael festival and of the renewal of the festivals as a whole, have two focal points: nature and culture. They enter into a mutual relationship with each other. Today, 50 years after Rudolf Steiner spoke thus, one can feel more clearly than ever before how necessary, in the truest sense of the word, it is to take up this impulse. Can nature - one must ask oneself - still be saved without shaping our co-operation with her into an element supporting our whole culture. With utilitarian considerations one cannot make good the rapidly increasing pollution of the world surrounding us. We must once again approach the Earth with reverent religious feelings, since Christ has assumed her as His body. We will be guided on our way if we learn to see how nature and culture are connected spiritually.

It is a deep tragedy in Rudolf Steiner's life that he had to recognise that the conception of Michael in the souls of anthroposophists was not strong enough for them to feel that



such an impulse wanted to well forth directly out of the time, forming creative forces. (*GA 223 The Cycle of the Year, lecture of 2/4/1923*).

One question is still to be posed: Why did Rudolf Steiner not simply organise the Michael festival that he so greatly wished? He had the authority for it, and we would today all be diligent in celebrating a Michael festival completely according to his instructions. But then it would still just have been only an old festival again as far as the institution is concerned. A new festival must be adopted out of the enthusiasm of the ego-consciousness, in complete freedom. That may be the reason too why he gave no instructions for the celebration of the seasonal festivals in the southern hemisphere.

## SUPPLEMENTARY ASPECTS OF THE EXPERIENCE OF THE SEASONS OF THE YEAR - HUMAN AND ESOTERIC KNOWLEDGE

We have up to the present, only so far as it was necessary for the treatment of the respective themes, always sought to show how far man has emancipated himself from the course of the year, or is bound to it and should remain so. But Rudolf Steiner ever and again spoke afresh about it, saying that humanity is connected in a divergent way with the Earth and its life. The connection with the universe is of great human importance.

"As regards his spirit he (man) goes through the world independent of the external phenomena; as far as his soul is concerned he is not so independent of outward manifestations .... something that takes place in the soul is connected with cosmic rhythm..... Still more do we stand as physical beings within the general cosmic phenomena. Our whole physical being interplays with the external world. And it is indeed the case that here we not only take part in a rhythm as we do with soul weaving, but that we stand completely within this outer physical life.

"The Greek would have expressed it thus: 'What is out there also lives within us. We say that the spinach grows out there; I pick it, cook it and eat it, and thereby have it in my stomach, that is, in my physical body; in the same way we can say: there outside in the course of the year there lives and weaves an etheric life, and that I have within myself.' " (*Described in full in GA 205 The Riddle of Man, lectures of 24/6/1921 and 28/6/1921*).

Similar descriptions appear in many, many lectures. Here is a selection:

"Of the plant seed, because he sees it, man believes that it goes through a yearly cycle, that it must penetrate down into the depths of the earth in order to be able to unfold again in the warmth and the light of the Sun's rays in spring. That such a cycle can also exist for the human soul itself, indeed is constantly there, of that people at first notice nothing. They notice it only when they are initiated into the great mysteries of existence. Our own inner being of soul is connected with the spiritual forces of the Earth, just as the power in each plant seed is connected with the physical forces of the Earth. .... Indeed, parallel with the experience of the plant seed in the natural depths of the Earth, goes a spiritual experience in the spiritual depths of the Earth - it runs parallel." (*GA 127 Symbolism and Fantasy in Relation to the Mystery Play 'The Soul's Probation', lecture of 26/12/1911.*)

"Like sleep, like darkness of the being of nature, appears to us the time in which the Christmas festival is established. Quite the opposite to external nature is the experience of the human soul. Whereas the beings of nature descend into darkness and the human soul accompanies them into this realm of eclipse of the Sun, in the human soul it

becomes brighter - or can at least become so. It can, through the natural course of events, which we have frequently indicated as a certain inherited clairvoyance, or through trained clairvoyance, plunge into the clearest spiritual world where the secrets of the spirit then dawn upon it, the secrets that lie hidden behind the external physical things. And just as a regular law underlies this descent of the plant world at the time of winter, so also a similar law underlies the spiritual blossoming of man, so that its clear luminosity coincides with the darkness of nature into which the Christmas festival is placed." (GA 158 *Introductory Words to 'Olaf Asteson', lecture of 1/1/1912.*)

"The great beings of nature within which we live pass through spiritual transformations just as man himself, who is a microcosmic counterpart of the great macrocosm. And therewith also is connected the fact that really living together, a spiritual living together with nature, has a certain significance." (GA 157 *The Forming of Destiny and Life after Death, lecture of 21/12/1915.*)

"Our soul is something completely different in the moonlight after the spring equinox. Our soul can therefore experience something quite different at this time than at any other time." (GA 167 *Things of the Present and of the Past in the Spirit of Man, lecture of 18/4/1916.*)

"We must grow to feel that as in the individual human life the soul rules the body, so in everything that goes on outside, in the rising and setting stars, in the bright sunlight, and fading twilight, there dwells something spiritual; and just as we belong to the air with our lungs, so do we belong to the spiritual part of the universe with our souls. We do not belong to the abstract spiritual life of an outgrown pantheism, but to that concrete spirituality which lives in individual beings. And so we shall find that just as in a man drawing breath something spiritual lives which belongs to the human soul, which indeed is the human soul itself, so we shall find that in intimate connection with what lives in the course of the year is the Christ Being; that the course of the year with its secrets belongs to the Christ-Being, who went through the Mystery of Golgotha." (GA 175 *Cosmic and Human Metamorphoses, lecture of 13/3/1917.*)

"It leads us to cast a glance at the connection of the human being, that is the whole human being, with our Earth planet. I have often said in different connections that man is subject to a kind of delusion when he assumes himself as physical man to be a complete, special being separated from the Earth planet. Yes, man is independent, individual as a soul-spiritual being. But as physical earthly man he belongs to the Earth in its organic entirety, and in certain respect also according to his etheric body." (GA 232 *Mystery Knowledge and Mystery Centres, lecture of 30/11/1923.*)

Because man is on the one hand part of the life of the Earth with his etheric nature, just as he belongs with his astrality to the earth's surroundings, but on the other hand is placed in a space of freedom with his ego, out of which he can contemplate the world as a free individuality, a sublime possibility of development is opened up to him: He can acquire higher knowledge in conscious living together with the external world. We have indeed already seen in the *Calendar of the Soul* that experiencing the

transformations of nature can lead to an experience of the Etheric Christ. How man by living together with the external world can gain knowledge of the spiritual worlds, Rudolf Steiner depicts in the following example:

"In order to gain knowledge of the spiritual world - I have already given you various other means - we must learn to live correctly in the outer world. How do people really live in the outer world these days? As we said recently, we freeze terribly and often we sweat a lot, and this is how most people normally experience living in the world. First they sweat, then they freeze. This is not the only way one can live into the outer world, however. Rather one should try to cultivate a certain capacity so that when it is cold, one isn't just cold but rather one becomes aware of a kind of qualitative experience that goes with it, namely that of fear. When one is aware of fear, one easily notices that with the return of warmth fear disappears. When a person cultivates a certain awareness of fear connected with the coming of snow: when the warm rays of the sun bring a certain pleasant comforting feeling - that person is in fact living into the outer world in a way that leads to higher knowledge. This belongs with the other requirements I have tried to describe. It is really true that whoever wants to gain higher knowledge must feel something when he comes close to a glowing piece of iron, and he must feel something different when he approaches a piece of flint. ...

"We really must acquire a sensitivity to the inner feeling for whatever is at hand out there in nature. What will this produce? Let us examine things as they are now. Materialists assert above all that the Earth has a crust of hard stone - they believe in this hard rock of the Earth because they can walk on it and when they touch it, it is hard. Materialists believe in this hard rock, but whoever wants to gain higher knowledge should experience a certain fearfulness of this same hard rock. This fear is totally absent when a man finds himself in the warm air.

"Yet it is possible to enter a condition such that even the warmed air would make one afraid. This is the case when one attempts to get closer and closer to the feeling that one gets from the warm air. In a person who feels more and more comfortable living in the quality of the warm air, the warmth too will eventually cause fear. It seems strange, but the better one feels, the more fearful one becomes! When one gets used to feeling completely at ease in warmed air, when one becomes more and more used to the warmth and is fully at ease inside all of nature, then one can find spiritual knowledge.

"At this point something quite remarkable happens - I will try to make it clearer to you. Most people try to keep cool, to cool off when they get warm - all they know is that it is very pleasant to get cooled off. But if, instead of this, one were to soak up the good feeling of the warmth - then whatever it is that I have drawn here schematically would start to fill itself with all kinds of images, and the spiritual world would literally arise: the spiritual world which is contained in the air, which one does not normally feel and is not conscious of, because in most cases one cannot tolerate the warmth in the air.

"When one becomes accustomed to seeing those beings in the air, one gradually reaches the point where one can tell oneself: when I take a stone in my hand, it is very hard;

but when I become more and more aware of the spiritual, when I am able to penetrate into the spiritual, when there is more and more activity around me - not just the sensory world but also the spiritual world - I can do something more. I cannot slip into the hard ground with my physical body of flesh and blood, but with my astral body I can actually slip into the earth. That is very interesting - at the moment that one starts to perceive the spiritual world in the realm of the air, at that moment one slips so far out of one's body that stones are no longer perceived as obstacles - and one can actually dive into the hard earth the way a swimmer dives into water. What is interesting is that we cannot penetrate into the air as spirits because there are already other spirits there; but in the earth, which is empty of spirit, it is very easy to gain entrance - one can dive under as a swimmer does.

“In between the solid and the gaseous elements we have the watery element. This rises and falls as rain. Up above, as I am sure you have seen, there are sometimes formations of lightning. The water is between the hard earth and the air; it is thinner than earth and denser than air. What is the meaning here? This is something that is easiest to understand if we consider lightning.

“According to the scientists, lightning is an electric spark. .... Think for a moment whether the water evaporates - it rises and reaches higher and higher into the region of the spiritual; it moves away from matter void of spirit here below, and rises into the spirituality above. It is actually spirit that produces what looks like our electric spark. For, as we rise, we move higher and higher into the regions of the spiritual. Matter is present only in proximity to the Earth. Higher up, it is surrounded by the spirit. Therefore, at the moment when the water vapour rises and reaches the region of the spiritual, the flash is produced. The water first becomes more spiritualized and then it falls down again, densified.

“If one observes nature correctly, one comes to the spirit in due course.”  
(*GA 350 Learning to See into the Spiritual World, lecture of 18/7/1923*).

This was quoted in such detail because we have to do here with the description of a way through the external world into the spiritual. So what we have mentioned above of the unity of spirit and Nature can become personal experience.

## METEOROLOGICAL NOTES

The weather has moods - like people; a person whose mood changes unexpectedly is 'as changeable as the weather'. The characteristic of the weather lies precisely in its unstable irregularity and incalculability. As long as Meteorology aims at comprehending the elements of the weather only numerically it will never be an exact science, even if it provides a legion of lightning-calculator computers with the most reliable data.

And yet something regular, strictly periodical, is superimposed on the incalculability of the weather. That already comes to expression in the events that the meteorologist calls 'singularities'. In the northern hemisphere for example, we have the 'Eisheiligen' (*Holres of the ice*) and in the southern hemisphere 'o veraninho de Sao Jao' - the little summer of St. John. If however one goes to the root of the singularities one soon finds that, even when they bring states of the weather apparently conflicting with the tendency of the Sun, they are nevertheless connected with the constant, equable and reliable movement of the Sun. What Rudolf Steiner calls the spiritual breathing in the course of the year depends alone on this; spiritual breathing in the course of the year depends solely on this regular movement of the Sun. In the old initiations man was supposed to reach the grade of 'Sun Hero' exactly because he had to raise himself out of the moods and caprices of the day in order to build up in himself a reliable rhythm like the pattern of the course of the Sun. Also the disorder of dream life would be contrasted with the order, regularity that the Sun brings about in man and that the aspirant become clairvoyant could first perceive. (*GA 137 Man in the Light of Occultism Theosophy and Philosophy, lecture of 9/6/1912*) One must therefore understand clearly that for example in the Northern hemisphere 'white Easter' - when snow lies at Easter - does not alter the fact that it is cosmically spring.

Naturally, today one knows quite well the factors that influence the atmospheric conditions. There is above all the difference between land and sea: in the southern hemisphere the contrast between summer and winter is generally much slighter than in the northern hemisphere, because the predominating large areas of sea exert an equalising effect. In the northern hemisphere however there are within the same geographical latitudes differences in the average temperatures that are greater than the differences in meridional line to the equator. An example: the average January temperature on the Lofotens amounts to +3 degrees celcius and that of the Siberian town Verkhoyansk -47 degrees celcius; both lie on the 67 degrees north parallel!

Yet however different the regional climatic and weather conditions may be, there is no point on the Earth where the overriding power of the Sun's rhythm does not take effect. That too must be what Rudolf Steiner meant when he said ever and again that in the southern hemisphere the circumstances are simply 'opposite'.

There is another important esoteric aspect of the meteorological:

"On the Earth, the universe has, so to speak, the rhythm proper to mankind; in yonder world it has the rhythm in which we ourselves participate between death and rebirth. What, then, lies between the two? The rhythm proper to mankind gives us the faculty between birth and death to speak human words, to master human language. Cosmic rhythm enables us between death and a new birth to let the cosmic Word resound within us. The Earth endows us with the gift of speech. The universe, the spiritual universe, gives us the Logos. You will realize that conditions are utterly different in the sphere where cosmic rhythm gives us the Logos, from conditions here on the Earth, where we articulate the human word in the air.

"What, then, constitutes the boundary between the one realm and the other? Looking out into the physical world we have no perception of the cosmic rhythm. There is inner law and order in each realm, so what lies between them? Between them - if I may put it so - is the boundary at which the cosmic rhythm breaks, in that it is coming too near the Earth; between them is that which, in certain circumstances, may also bring the human breathing rhythm into disorder. Between them, in effect, are all the phenomena pertaining to meteorology. If on the Earth there were no blizzards, storms, wind, cloud formations, if the air did not contain, in addition to oxygen and nitrogen for our breathing, these meteorological phenomena which are always there however clear the air may appear to be - then we should look out into the universe and be aware of a different rhythm - actually the counterpart of our breathing rhythm, only transformed into infinite grandeur. Between the two spheres of the World-Order lie the chaotic weather phenomena of wind and weather, separating the cosmic rhythm and the human breathing rhythm from each other." (*GA 219 Man and the World of the Stars, lecture of 26/11/1922*).

No meteorological discussion of our theme is to be given here for we want above all to find our way by the statements made by Rudolf Steiner. However so that the conceptions which lie at the basis of this work may be understood, a summarised survey follows:

The seasons of the year are not of equal length. Astronomically speaking, the course of the Earth around the Sun follows an ellipse of which the Sun is one focus. The point nearest the Sun (the perihelion) is passed through on 2nd January, the farthest from the sun (the aphelion) on 4th July. According to Kepler's Second Law the movement of the planets at the perihelion is faster, at the aphelion slower. Therefore, summer in the northern hemisphere summer (aphelion) is about 8 days longer than summer in the southern hemisphere and vice-versa. The northern winter is alleviated through this brevity and the proximity of the Sun to the Earth, the southern winter correspondingly strengthened. That is one of the reasons why the bulk of the ice present on the earth lies in the Southern hemisphere. The Antarctic has 90% of the inland ice, Greenland 9%, and 1% is contained in the mountain glaciers. The Southern hemisphere is on the whole colder than the Northern hemisphere. Because of that the so-called 'thermal equator' is displaced by about 5 degrees of latitude to the north. Stated more exactly: The convergence (the equatorial region where trade winds meet, causing upward flowing air currents and consequent low pressure) within the tropics lies in the Southern winter

(July) at 10 - 12 degrees latitude north and only at times reaches in the southern summer (January), the geographical equator. The result of this is that there is no territory on earth in which the movement of the seasons is not perceptible!

Naturally the climatic factors in the different areas of the earth undergo the most multiform changes resulting from distribution of land and water, conditions of altitude, movement of the air and of water, etc. There are however qualitative elements in the seasons that are carried into effect ever and again within the differences. One of them is that the quality 'dry' pertains to winter. That may at first sound surprising; therefore a passage from the very informative book of Ernst Lehrs, '*Man or Matter*', may be quoted:

"What takes place in the formation of snow? In the first place the water is there in the form of atmospheric vapour. In this condition, the field of gravity of the earth has only a small influence on matter. Directly out of this state of balance a great number of individual snow crystals of manifold astonishingly complicated forms of the highest exactitude are condensed. Their forms are for the method of observation carried on here of interest because they are an example of how nature creates in metamorphoses also on this level of its activity. Here etheric-life activity comes directly to light.

“Let the reader transfer himself in thought to a glittering expanse of snow shone on by the Sun on a still clear winter's day. Far and wide no living thing, no movement is to be seen. There the substance of water, that in the liquid state serves to move the ever changing processes of life, covers the Earth in the form of geometrically shaped crystals of which each breaks and throws back many times the light falling on it from outside; a unique picture of the quality 'dry'.”

If we study the climatic conditions on the Earth, we find predominantly areas with summer rain and dry winters. (See the table from *Julius Hahn, Handbook of Climatology*, 4th Edition below).

	<b>Dec-Feb</b>	<b>Mar-May</b>	<b>June-Aug</b>	<b>Sept-Nov</b>
70-75 deg North	15*	18	42	25
50-30 deg North	20*	24	33	23
25-5 deg North	8*	18	42	32
Eq-20 deg South	34	33	10*	23
25-40 deg South	29	27	21*	23

*Zonal Distribution of Precipitation According to Season by Percentage of the Annual Total*

Everywhere on the land surfaces summer rain predominates, everywhere there in the greatest part of winter is the time of least precipitation. It is noticeable that it appears that in the months of September to November (in the northern hemisphere Autumn, in the Southern spring) in all latitudes from North to South the (relative) amount of precipitation is the most constant.



Zones of winter rain are to be found only in certain sections of the west coasts of continents. The most extensive area of winter rain is in the Mediterranean basin. In summer it lies normally under the influence of the well-known Azores high. During the cold season the fronts and 'high troughs' of the west drift, can drift through and bring heavy but mostly only brief rainfalls. A limited area round Cape Town, an area in southern California and in South Australia are among the further examples of zones of winter rain. One may however take the whole process of rain formation as a summer occurrence. Therefore it is not surprising that the zones of summer rain predominate on the earth.

Thus it is clear - and that is especially important for the southern hemisphere - that dry winter landscapes are true metamorphoses of the snow-covered areas. In the book mentioned, Lehrs develops another significant fact: a characteristic of the element 'earth' is that the qualities 'cold' and 'dry' belong to it. If one adopts that idea, one obtains a basis for the perception that in winter the Earth comes to itself - or, stated in essence, it can come to a self-consciousness.

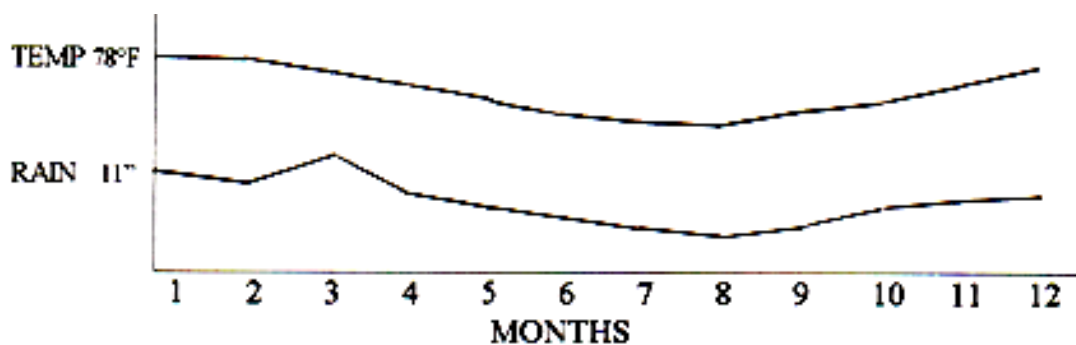
The meteorology of the southern hemisphere will now be made clear by an example: Before the first World War, Dr Alfred Usteri worked for a number of years as Professor of Botany at the Polytechnic in Sao Paola. He wrote a monograph on the flora of the surroundings of the town of Sao Paolo, in which he also entered in detail into the climatic conditions. In the chapter on phenology (that is the science of the connexion between the course of the atmospheric conditions and development of the plants during the year) he first of all goes into a remarkable work of A. Lofgren.

In this he describes enthusiastically the succession of flower colours during the year that he had observed in the plains of the wider surroundings of Sao Paolo. When after the first heavy showers of spring the plant growth stirs again, the labiates and compositae are the first to appear. Then it goes through blue and violet colours to the yellow of many leguminosae and cisalpines, then come the white myrtles, mallows, rubiaceae, there reappears a new violet and finally once more yellow in the most varied shades. Thus far Lofgren.

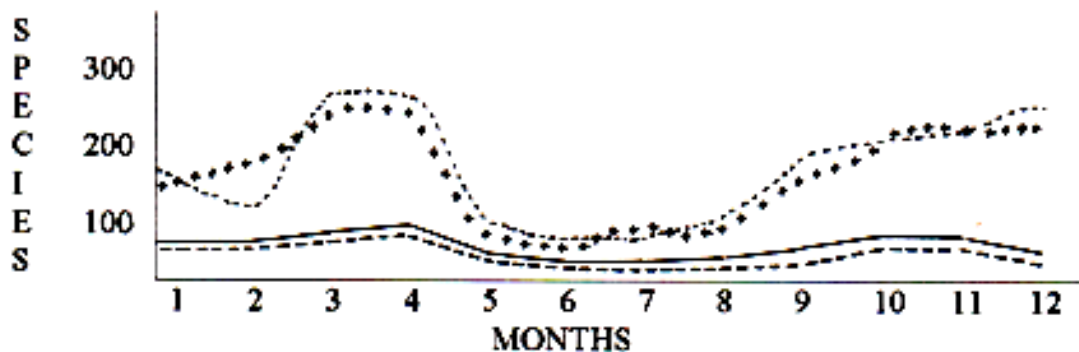
To that Usteri says: "Of this enthusiastic description much, but not all by a long chalk, is also applicable to the plains near Sao Paolo (surroundings of the city) investigated by me. Here too certain periods may clearly be distinguished according to the season. As is seen in the following table, one can distinguish with all the clarity that may be wished a winter that conforms with the climatic winter. The minimum temperature in June-July corresponds not only with the minimum humidity (in July) but also with the curves for all flowerings. But at the same time the table shows that Sao Paolo in no season, not even in winter, completely lacks flowers. It shows further that the richness of flowering from April to May rapidly diminishes, whereas its increase from July to August and September is much more gradual.

That is all quite in accord with the temperature curve. One can therefore clearly assert that the summer in Sao Paolo passes fairly suddenly into winter, but that a period that we can designate as spring comes into existence quite clearly. From experiencing and living with nature in Brazil throughout many years we can completely confirm Usteri's descriptions.

An investigation from meteorological aspects therefore shows as clearly as possible that the course of the year in the southern hemisphere fundamentally runs in exact polar symmetry with that of the northern hemisphere.



*Curves of temperature and rain at Sao Paolo*



- No. of flowering land plants encountered
- +++++++ No. of flowering water plants encountered
- ..... No. of flowering dicotyledons encountered
- No. of flowering monocotyledons encountered

*Curves of flowering at Sao Paolo*

## SECRETS OF THE ACTIVITY OF MATTER IN THE COURSE OF THE YEAR

In the question of the correct celebration of the festivals of the year in the southern hemisphere, the recognition of a connection between the course of the year in nature and the Christian festivals is undoubtedly of the greatest difficulty. This happens especially because the course of nature towards the equator seems to become ever more blurred. As long as we measure this 'disappearance' of the course of the year by the usual manifestations of the seasons, the statement is correct. There is simply no winter with ice and snow at the equator. However, we have already seen that a subtropical, dry winter landscape is a true metamorphosis of the snow covered regions of temperate latitudes. There we proceed from qualities. We only penetrate to the essence of the seasons when we glimpse the processes which penetrate deeply into the substances themselves.

Spring is the time of sprouting and germination. "... when the cover of snow melts in springtime and the sun regains its power, then the Imaginations of the Sun little by little float and weave round the earth. And these Imaginations of the Sun are imaginative forces, and these set the plants astir". (*GA 219 Man and the World of the Stars, lecture of 1/12/1922*). If we pay attention to these Sun-Imaginations we may say: Only apparently does the plant grow from below upwards; it is really formed from above where the Sun-Imaginations so to speak 'suck up' the materials necessary for the building up of the plants. The spiritual image of the plants is woven through with matter.

Attention must now be paid to this: The archetype of the plant is the annual plant. Trees and shrubs have in their woody parts made an earth of their own, or, expressed in another way: a tree trunk is earth pushed upwards. What 'bursts into leaf' there in spring is to be regarded as an annual plant. Between trees and plants there are naturally the most varied intermediate stages. But let us remain here - so that the principle is clear - always with the annual plant.

The Sun-Imagination of the plant is not static, it is completely mobile and flowing in character; hence the star forces can also take part in its formation, as is evident in the manifold spiral tendencies.

Now how does this interweaving of the spiritual images and matter proceed? Throughout the winter, matter is prepared in a special way for the inworking of the Sun-Imaginations: "All that is in the widest sense of the word salt formation, salt formation in the sense that it settles as sediment in the physical sense, as the dissolved common salt can deposit as sediment in a small water jug, all that is this kind of salt formation in the widest sense - I will not go into chemical details now, but in it the same principle would manifest - all that has the property of being to some extent permeable to the spiritual. Where there is salt, the spiritual has to a certain extent free space; the

spiritual can penetrate where there is salt. So that because the Earth in the depth of winter is consolidated with regard to its salt formation, firstly the elemental beings that are united with the Earth have as we say a 'pleasant' dwelling place within the Earth, but also other spiritual parts of the cosmos are attracted and so to speak can dwell in what as a salt crust is directly beneath the surface of the earth." (GA 229 *The Four Seasons and the Archangels*, lecture of 6/10/1923).

We can regard the plant seeds lying in this 'salt crust' as a kind of 'condensing lens' for those Sun-Imaginations that underlie the plant forms belonging to these seeds. It should be noted that the limestone deposits particularly belong to these kinds of salt deposits, as described by Rudolf Steiner.

When the Sun-Imaginations flowing to them now grasp the seeds, these at first put out a little root. The roots however draw water and carbonate from the lime that is to be met with everywhere in the finest distributions. While the lime lay there in winter as a kind of 'salt' it was a spiritually awake being 'at peace' with itself. But now it becomes dull, on account of the loss it suffers as a result of the withdrawal, and begins to stir greedily. The more the plants sprout and grow in spring and towards summer, the more inwardly alive the limestone becomes.

By this, quite a remarkable situation occurs: This lime, which has become alive, exercises on the ahrimanic beings an enormous power of attraction. They get the illusion that they can ensoul the lime that has become alive. ".... this illusion is present in the ahrimanic beings each spring, and in each spring is foiled. It is true from the human standpoint one can say: By now the ahrimanic beings must have given up this hope. But things don't happen in the world as man pictures them, but it is simply a fact that these ahrimanic beings each spring gather new hopes again that they will be able to change the earth into an ensouled living being by an astral rain from above. These illusions are destroyed each year." (GA 229 *The Four Seasons and the Archangels*, lecture of 7/10/1923).

On the other hand assimilation begins in the sprouting plant, it absorbs carbonic acid. Luciferic beings now look at that and want to raise the carbonic acid upwards, into their realm so to speak. For they are purely astral beings and would like to become etheric. But the illusions of the luciferic beings must also be destroyed.

"By this the two extremes of human nature are inscribed into the life of the Earth itself: that extreme of the human that man would become if, under the influence of Ahriman as it were, he would absorb living chalk and in this way gradually become one with the Earth, be dissolved in the whole living sentient Earth being; that is one extreme. The other extreme is what man could become if the luciferic beings had their way; namely, to make arise from below a mist of carbonic acid so that breath would become impossible, so that man thereby as physical man had to disappear but that the ether bodies would amalgamate with what is there up above as astral, luciferic angel being."

From the supersensible observation of these two opposing strivings of the antagonistic powers there now emerges a third:

"Whoever develops a feeling for how the luciferic above there in the carbonic acid mist wants to choke physical humankind, how there below the ahrimanic in the astralic rain will so call to life the whole earth in its chalk masses that man in it first of all becomes sclerotic, dissolved, whoever observes that: for him there arises between the luciferic and the ahrimanic the figure of Christ, of the Christ freeing Himself from matter, who has Ahriman beneath His feet, who develops out of the ahrimanic, taking no account of the ahrimanic, overcoming it, as has been presented here in painting and in sculpture.

“And he sees this Christ as He overcomes on the other side what wants to draw the upper part of man away from the earth. There appears the head of that figure that triumphs over Ahriman, the head of Christ appears with such a physiognomy, with such a glance, with such a demeanour that this glance, that this look has been wrested from the evaporating forces of Lucifer. The luciferic power drawn into the earthly and held there - such is the form of Christ as He appears every year in spring. That is how we must picture Him: standing on the earthly, which Ahriman seeks to make his own; victorious over death, ascending from the grave as the Risen One to the Transfiguration, which comes from carrying over the luciferic into the earthly beauty of the countenance of Christ. So, the Risen Christ in His Resurrection form appears before our eyes, between the luciferic and ahrimanic forms as the Easter picture; the Risen Christ, with luciferic powers hovering above and the ahrimanic powers under His feet.

“This cosmic Imagination comes before us as the Easter Imagination, just as the Virgin with the Child appears as the Christmas Imagination in deep winter, and the Michael Imagination for the end of September. You will see how right it was to portray the Christ in the form you see here, a form born out of cosmic happenings in the course of the year. There is nothing arbitrary about this.” (*GA 229 The Four Seasons and the Archangels, lecture of 7/10/1923*).

Here the Easter Mystery is unmistakably connected directly with the processes of nature, for "the Mystery of Golgotha did not only occur once as a single event. Certainly it had to be placed into Earth happenings as a single event; but this event, this Mystery of Golgotha is renewed every year for humanity in a certain sense." Indeed, Rudolf Steiner quite unmistakably meant that this Imagination is united with the course of nature for he said at the beginning of the lecture: "Naturally what I shall be saying applies only to that part of the Earth's surface where a corresponding transition from winter to spring takes place."

What we have shown here in the Easter Imagination can be pursued further through the year. The trained eye perceives in the substances, processes that at the four great festival times are formed into cosmic Imaginations. It is exceedingly moving to experience - if, for example, one lives completely into the Christmas Imagination - how what are earthly formations in the salt-, mercury-, and ash-processes are conceived and transformed by the effects of Sun and air and how from that is formed the Imagination

of the Mother with the Child: "The Child is Sunlike. So that one now has the possibility of seeing the Woman who has borne the Child as being in the deepest sense related with all Earth processes .... for the Earth so prepares itself in the depth of winter that it has the salt-tendency, that is the Moon-tendency .... so that it has prepared itself in the best way to absorb the Sun-tendency. And then she towers over and above the Sun-element into the Heavens to which of course the human head belongs also."  
(GA 229, lecture of 6/10/1923).

For the southern hemispere Rudolf Steiner says at the beginning of this lecture: "And while for our further studies we must keep firmly in view this winter character of the Earth, we must of course not forget that when winter prevails over half the Earth, the other half is experiencing summer. This is a fact we must keep in the background of our minds."

So that we should understand such Imaginations in the right way, a little digression into theoretical knowledge is necessary.

From Goethe we may learn how one has to put questions to nature: The reality is revealed to us when we face it with open senses. But sense experience yields only half the reality. If we want the whole we must bring our thinking into motion. Goetheanism is therefore, if we want to say it briefly, the art of reading the book of nature as a text of the spirit. Anthroposophy goes a step further: It is able to penetrate into the inner part of nature by opening higher paths of knowledge. On these it steps forward from Imagination to Inspiration and Intuition.

Once on the stage of a Goetheanistic world observation, a severe discipline is required of us. We may neither let ourselves be overpowered by the flood of sense impressions or succumb to the temptations of abstract thinking. Thinking must ever anew adapt itself nimbly to the sense experiences.

The discipline in thought life becomes indispensable if we want to rise to supersensible perception. The thinking must then be able to dispense with the supports of sense experience without lapsing into meaningless brooding. "If, for instance, one wants to get to know the true import of thinking, if one wants to know the real truth that thinking has cosmic meaning, then one must raise oneself to the imaginative view described in 'Knowledge of the Higher Worlds'. As soon as man divests thinking of that abstraction that it has for our consciousness, and plunges into that weaving sea of the thought-world, he arrives at the necessity of not having in it only such abstract thoughts as earthly man has, but of having picture thoughts. For everything is created from pictures, pictures are the true origins of things, pictures lie behind everything that surrounds us, and we dive into these pictures when we plunge into the sea of thinking. Plato meant these pictures, everyone who has spoken from spiritual foundations has meant these pictures, Goethe had in mind these pictures when he spoke of his 'Ur-plant'. These pictures are found in imaginative thinking. But this imaginative thinking is a reality, and we plunge into it when we dive into the surging thinking flowing in the stream of time." (GA 157, lecture of 6/7/1915).

Yet by what has it become possible for man to be able to perceive the high Christ-Sun-Being in the pictures of the season's metamorphoses?

"The Christ-Individuality comes from the Sun and only set foot on the Earth at the baptism by John, and was in the physical body of Jesus of Nazareth only for three years. It is the characteristic feature of this Christ-Individuality that it was appointed that He should work in the earthly world for only three years. He is the same Being to whom Zarathustra pointed when he named Him Ahura Mazdao, who stands behind the visible Sun, the same whom the Holy Rishis proclaimed, of whom the Greeks spoke as of the Being who was behind the Pleroma. It is the Being who little by little has become the Spirit of our Earth, the Aura of our Earth since the Blood flowed on Golgotha. The first person who was granted to see thus, in that he was not stimulated by physical experience, was Paul.

"So something happened through the Event of Golgotha that has brought a quite new flow of events into the development of our Earth. Previously everything was in existence that made it possible for the most varied concepts to be absorbed by means of the manifold religions. What worked over out of the Buddha religion, in that the Being of Buddha streamed into the astral-aura of Jesus, and what I have recounted to you, that from out of Nature the soul will perceive and experience afresh, means nothing else than that just as the Christ Individuality descended through the baptism into the physical body, and dwelt in it up to the event of Golgotha, and so was there as physical occurrence on the physical plane, just so it will begin a new activity now in the etheric world. We may therefore speak of a physical embodiment as regards the baptism by John up to Golgotha, and now of an etheric reappearance.

"By developing the etheric body for instance, through the autumnal impressions that humanity weaves into itself, the Etheric Christ is perceived." (*GA 130 Esoteric Christianity and the Mission of Christian Rosenkreutz, lecture of 19/9/1911*).

Modern man must therefore learn more and more to raise his glance from the Christ-events that have taken place in the physical plane to the etheric world in which He now reveals Himself in a new way.

"That will be the greatest event for human soul development right into future times, that event for which Spiritual Science must prepare, so that human souls become capable of gaining that etheric perception. And in the next three thousand years it will take hold of more and more human souls, and the next three thousand years will be devoted essentially to the powers of the human soul building up, those powers that can become aware of the etheric wonders of nature around it. In our century it will begin that here and there people will behold the Christ again from out of their etheric soul, and ever more and more people will do so throughout the next three millenia." (*GA 129 Wonders of the World, lecture of 19/8/1911*).

One may certainly be confident that, as the human soul becomes 'seeing' in the way described, it will gain sufficiently deep insight into the processes of substances, and no longer be dependent upon having to read the reality revealed in the course of the year in external phenomena such as ice and snow. The time has come. Thus in the near future the questions so sorely felt today will be solved regarding the correct celebration of the cycle of the festivals, if people do not obstruct the approach to such possibilities of beholding by abstract-sentimental practices.



## THE RENEWAL OF THE FESTIVALS OF THE YEAR

In the chapter on the seasonal festivals, it was already mentioned that they had been established by initiates from occult bases. They do not rest on historical facts. It is generally known that the Christmas festival was first celebrated in the year 354 AD in Rome. For the fact that the occult backgrounds of the festivals were connected with the course of nature during the year there are numerous indications from that time.

Jerome (about 350-420 AD) brought from Rome the custom to Palestine of the festival of the birth of Jesus. But he still based it according to the season. In a homily on the birth of the Lord he says: "Even the creatures agree with our sermon, the cosmos is witness to the truth of our word. Up to this day the days grow darker, from this day onward the darkness diminishes. The light increases, the nights decline! The light of day increases, erroneousness decreases, the truth ascends. For today is born to us the Son of Righteousness." (*G. Morin, Heironmyi Presbyteri tractatus sive homiliae, Maredsous 1897*)

Zeno of Verona (362-372 AD, *Bishop in Verona*) says in a homily: "The driver of the chariot of eternity who takes his course in his annual rotation around his ultimate aim, the Day of Salvation, is come. He follows Himself, He leads Himself, He is old and yet always young, Procreator of the year and Offspring of the year, the God of our Lord, perished and risen again, never again to perish - for it is the Day on which the darkness of death was rent asunder!" (*Tractatus II, 49*) And in another homily: "In magnificent rotation the Holy Day returns. He drives to the completion of His work in the world on the four-horse chariot of the seasons, abundant by the succession of the 12 moons, in unbroken journey." (*Tractatus II, 52*) (*F.J. Dolger, Sol Salutis, Munster 1925*).

By Cyril of Alexandria, the quarrelsome and quarreled over bishop, who had the task every year to announce to Christendom the astronomical calculation of the Easter festival (*he was bishop from 412-444 AD*) we find in an Easter homily: "We call spring the time which now dawns. And it seems to me, a man with poetic tongue and lofty spirit should be able to wind a precious garland in praise of spring. Gone is the dreary spectacle of winter. Helios sparkles as if he had wiped off the dust from his face and pours out his beauty in new lustre over mountain and valleys, over forests and groves. Everything becomes young again, and spring weaves her garland from fresh blossoms .... But I believe all this to be little were not the spring for another reason also praiseworthy above all other times: together with nature indeed that being now also celebrates His resurrection, who gathers together all nature in himself, man. For this time of spring bears up with it the Resurrection of our Saviour through Whom we will all be changed in the newness of life and withdrawn for ever from the corruption of death." One must clearly bring to one's consciousness: Thus preached Cyril of Alexandria. Certainly in his winter there was no ice nor snow. But the people of his time were still more sensitive and receptive to what happens in the change of the seasons.

One sees therefore: The seasonal element still played an important part in the first centuries of the development of Christianity. Later the 'heathenish' elements were extinguished and forgotten. But we must not keep to this today, for:

"Our Christianity must be expanded by a permeation with a healthy paganism. Nature must again become something to us. It is a strange feature of the development of humankind in the part of the present epoch of the fifth post-Atlantean period which has elapsed so far that we have become ever more and more indifferent towards nature." But "... humankind, if it wants to develop in a healthy way, must develop a kind of personal relationship to every detail through which it is connected with nature." (GA 190 *The Social Question as a Problem of Soul Life, lecture of 29/3/1919*)

If one surveys all that Rudolf Steiner had to say on the festivals of the year one can recognise a turning point in the year 1921. (It really begins with Christmas time 1920/21) If earlier he had picked up the traditions, interpreting them in an essentially loving way, and rendered them accessible to a new spiritual understanding, he now aims with frequently very clearly stressed words at a renewal of the content of the festivals.

The whole lecture of 23/12/1920 is a summons to a thorough renewal of the Christmas festival. It culminates in the sentences: "The Christmas mystery must be found anew. We must become as devout with Nature as the shepherds were devout in their hearts. We must become as wise in our inner intuition as the Magi had become in their observation of planets and stars in space and time." (GA 202 *The Search for the New Isis*).

We now can refer to what in early Christendom was still living and has been forgotten. The Ravenna mosaics proclaim it: Christ is Dionysos and Apollo at the same time.

We find Him as the spirit in nature and as the light of our souls. Fundamentally the renewal of the year's festivals begins with our completely absorbing into our feeling the original unity of nature and spirit.

The voice that the shepherds in the fields heard with their hearts announced to them that the Godhead reveals Itself in the vast phenomena of the cosmos, and that by the reception of the Godhead in the individual soul, peace can arise among men of goodwill. That must make itself known to modern man from out of the whole circle of nature. To the Magi from the East, the secrets of the stars have said that here on the Earth Christ Jesus is born. That must make itself known to modern man by following what can reveal itself in their inner being.

We need a new way. The voice urges us anew: "Change your outlook, fix your eyes in a new way on the course of the world! .... In a Gospel not acknowledged by the Church it is related that characteristic of one Jesus Child was that immediately after his birth he had spoken to his mother in certain words. Undoubtedly we today approach the child lying in the manger in the right way when we listen in the right way to the words that he

wishes to speak to us: Arouse the Christmas light within you, and the Christmas light will shine rightly for you and your fellow men in the external world also."  
(GA 202 *The Search for the New Isis, lecture of 23/12/1920*)

The next day, Christmas Eve 1920, Rudolf Steiner says from a more comprehensive standpoint: "We know in what intimate connection we have to see what takes place morally and spiritually in the development of mankind with what goes on in nature. And with some understanding for this bridge between the existence of nature and moral ordering of the world, we can also look at that relationship of Christ Jesus to that Being whose outer reflection is revealed in the Sun. Not always were those professing and representing the Christian impulse hostile to the recognition of this connection between the Sun Mystery and the Christ Mystery as those of the present day, the representatives of a Christianity which has come into decadence, frequently are."

Shortly after, in the same lecture, reference was made to the Sistine Madonna so that one can have the impression: There rises up in the soul of the speaker the Christmas-Imagination which then on the 6/10/1923 was so sublimely described (GA 229 *The Four Seasons and the Archangels*). We can comprehend the lectures of 23 to 26/12/1920 as an introduction to the images and perspectives which then from December 1922 to October 1923 were developed in such a masterly way.

Rudolf Steiner in these lectures takes the traditional custom sharply to task: "There should be understanding within this Society (of Anthroposophists) for the fact that it is really disastrous for the modern time, that such things as the Christmas festival live on like an empty phrase. .... We should prohibit ourselves from persevering in this inner hollowness of the Christmas celebration." That is still valid today! Rudolf Steiner also picked up individual motifs of the traditional Christmas celebrations to indicate in them that really reactionary tendencies live in them, although as single themes they have of course beautiful and estimable contents. He said exceedingly beautiful things about the Christmas tree but he also said: "The Christmas tree on the one hand, the national gods who did not quite reach Christianity on the other, were that by which men returned back from comprehending the Mystery of Golgotha to a much earlier time." Indeed the Christmas tree is depicted as the symbol for the rising again of the Jehovah religion.  
(GA 203 *The Festivals and their Meaning, lecture of 1/1/1921*)

He spoke exceptionally beautifully about the adoration of the child in the manger, but he also said: "What once emerged in a magnificent way as the Mystery of Birth, the Christmas Mystery, plunged little by little within the evolving western culture into those sentimentalities that yet were only the opposite pole for the materialistic development, into those sentimentalities that revelled and indulged in all those songs about little Jesus. It was a voluptuous luxuriating in the sentiment of the little child. Instead of experiencing the vast, powerful Mystery of the entering of a super-earthly Spirit in the Christmas Mystery, the empty, philistine songs of the little Jesus gradually became the main thing." (GA 203 *The Festivals and their Meaning, lecture of 27/3/1921*)

The Adam and Eve Day (24 December) he characterised as "a deviation from the true mystery of the birth of Christ Jesus." (*GA 202 The Search for the New Isis, lecture of 23/12/1920*).

If one looks today at what also among Anthroposophists is organised for the festivals, one sees clearly that the impulses of the last years of Rudolf Steiner's activity in many respects still await realisation. Everywhere old traditions are picked up. A whole postcard culture has developed, old masters, icons, pictures of Michael, old songs, legends and sagas are taken up. Individually all is certainly lovely and understandable. But they are still really deviations from the real thing that must take place if humanity's progress is to take its true advance. To this belong also the - naturally always interesting - chronological researches on the life of Jesus. We have already indicated that it would be fatal if we had to base our surety of faith on ancient documents. The burning question in our hearts should be: How do I find Christ here and now?

In the lecture of 25/12/1920, Rudolf Steiner said that in the face of the destruction of the old civilisation, really new creations must arise: "These new creations cannot be built if we do not rouse ourselves really seriously to focussing upon that which must be done for mankind. .... Modern humanity is crossing a threshold at which an important guardian stands, a stern guardian. And this stern guardian says this especially: Do not hang on to relics from old times. Look into your hearts, look into your souls, that you may be able to build new creations! You will only be able to build these new creations if you have the firm belief that the strength of knowledge and of will for this new spiritual creativity can come from the spiritual world. What must be a specially intense event for the individual man on setting foot in the worlds of higher knowledge, to some extent it takes place unconsciously for all mankind at the present time. And those who have united as Anthroposophical Society should understand that it is one of the most necessary things at the present time to make people understand this passage through this sphere of the threshold." (*GA 202 The Search for the New Isis*).

On the 23rd May 1923 Rudolf Steiner gives the best example of such a 'new creation' : The creation of a Michael festival out of the spirit. Once more the cycle of the festivals is clearly linked with the course of nature: "Just as man inhales and exhales the air so that it is at one time within him and another outside him, so does the Earth breathe in its soul. That is during the winter time. And in the time of high summer, at midsummer, St John's time, the soul of the Earth has been exhaled entirely, breathed out into the wide spaces of the cosmos. Then the Earth is in a certain sense empty of the Earth soul. The Earth soul takes part in the events of the cosmos, the movement of the stars and so on. .... In wintertime the Earth's soul is in the Earth, at midsummer the Earth's soul is completely outside in cosmic space, in spring it is on the way to cosmic space." Therefore the Easter festival cannot be fixed according to the Earth alone, on a stated day, but must be set according to the star constellations.

Now for autumn, the new Michael festival is to be created. "It is possible for this autumn time to be experienced with the same intensity as springtime. And as we experience in the spring-Easter time, the death and resurrection of the God, so can we

experience in autumn time the resurrection and death of the human soul, that is to say the experience of resurrection during earthly life in order to go through death in the right way. But then we must also understand what it means for us, for our present time, that the Earth's soul during midsummer is breathed out into the cosmic spaces, there to be united with the stars and to return again. He who sees through the secrets of this Earth cycle in the course of the year knows that when the Michael power comes down again through the forces of nature, which in earlier centuries did not come down; so that we can bravely face autumn shedding its leaves by seeing in it the approach of the Michael force coming from out of the clouds to the Earth.

“Yes, in the calendars on this day it says 'Michael', and Michaelmas is considered as a country festival. But to experience the present time spiritually in such a way the human earthly events link together with the events of nature, that we shall accomplish only when we become again capable of understanding the course of the year so deeply that we can create seasonal festivals in the course of the year - as ancient men out of their clairvoyance created them. The ancients understood the cycle of the year, and out of these secrets that I can only allude to today they created Christmas, Easter and the Midsummer festival. People give each other presents at Christmas, they also do other things, but I have often discussed, when I have held Christmas or Easter lectures here, how little people get out of these ancient festival arrangements today, how everything has become traditional and external. But once people understand again the festivals, which today are only celebrated without being understood, they will also have the power, out of the spiritual understanding of the course of the year, to establish a festival that only has the right meaning for present day humanity. That will be the Michael festival in the last days of September, when autumn draws near, the leaves wither, the trees become bare, nature goes towards death - just as she went towards birth at Easter time - and when we discern in declining nature how the soul of the Earth unites again with the Earth, how Michael brings the Earth soul with him down from the clouds.

“When we have the strength to create such a festival from out of the spirit that brings unity again into our social life, then we shall have achieved it out of the spirit. For then we shall have founded something among us for which the spirit is the origin.”  
(GA 224 *The Festivals and their Meaning*, lecture of 23/5/1923).

## MEDICAL ASPECTS OF THE PROBLEM

The knowledge that man passes in the course of the year through changes in his whole bodily-spiritual structure has always appertained to the fundamental knowledge of medicine. Thanks to Rudolf Steiner's suggestions, it can be considerably amplified.

In the periodical 'Nature' (*Vol 1,3*) Dr Ita Wegman already wrote in 1926: "We must experience in ourselves the physiological processes that take place in the lower human being, in the head human being and in the middle, as divided in three parts.

“There is a sulphur process, that is a kind of combustion process, in which metabolic processes and everything connected with them take their course. It is a process comparable to the flowering of the plant, and it comes about by the physical-etheric processes interacting with astral influences. Now the blossoming process of the plant can also be described as a kind of animal-forming process checked in coming into being, except that since the astral world acts on the plant only from the outside it does not come in it to processes that are to be found only in the animal organism, and which are connected with its digestion, breathing and blood formation. And while in the plant one can speak only of a tendency to become animal-like, in man we have the animal-forming principle in all the processes that go on in his digestion, breathing and blood formation in which the astral body has an active part inside man. That this animal forming process is held back in the lower man within definite boundaries, we owe to the ego that leads us above the animal upward to humanity. In the metabolic-limb system, too, man is in intimate connection with the earth forces.

“The upper human being, the nerve-and sense man, however is connected with cosmic forces, with the forces of the stars. But at the same time, breaking-down processes take place in the nerve and sense system that are comparable with the mineralising, the salt-forming processes in external nature, and which are necessary in the human organisation so that man may come to conscious life.

“Between them, in the middle or rhythmic man, the so-called mercury processes are active which course through the breathing and blood circulation, and are connected with the forces of light and air, the forces that are to be found in the circumference of the earth. Likewise the mercurial principle in man must be considered as that which holds in him the balance between light and heaviness, between earthly and extra-earthly influences.

“These processes are always taking place in the human organisation, and a person's health is the expression of these three processes working harmoniously in him. And illness is the result of one or the other of these vital principles being able to gain the upper hand.

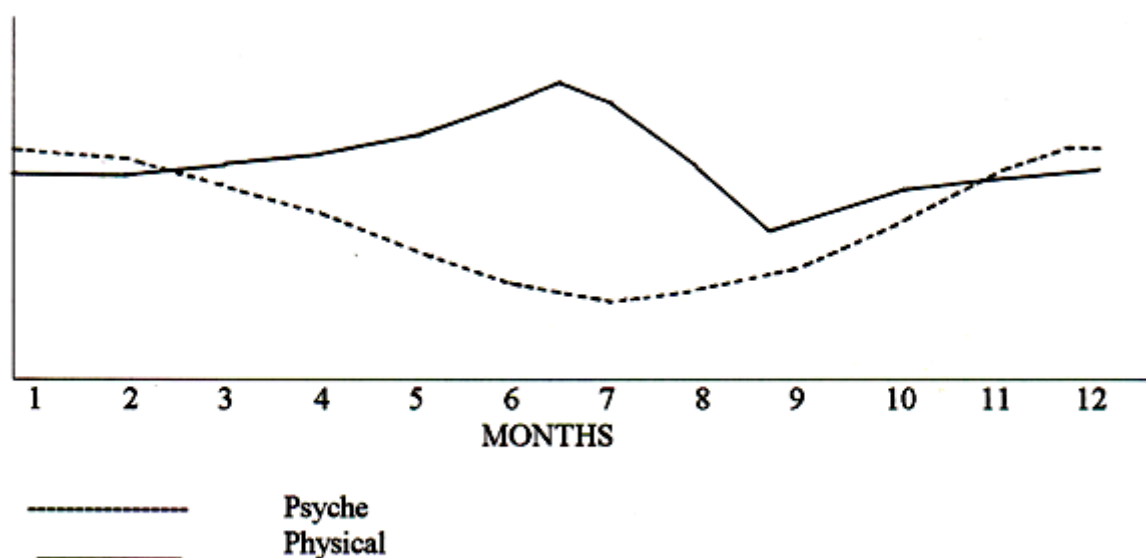
“Now these physiological processes in man within the course of the year are influenced by the different seasons in different ways. Thus the salt processes are more in the

foreground at winter time, and with that is united a more clearly conscious life, devoting less energy to external things. Man leads a more inward life and he has the possibility of confronting the riddles of life with subtler thinking.

“In summer time an increase of the sulphur processes begins, with their culminating point at midsummer time. People also feel in themselves the life processes increased, their energy for external life is stimulated, and the earthly forces assert themselves more in them. On the other hand a damping down of consciousness is connected with this, people's thinking is less clear when the metabolic processes become rampant, and they are in danger of losing themselves in a dreamlike condition.”

We see from these arguments that the occurrences in the substances in outer nature are projected into the human organism, and can be grasped physiologically there.

Already in 1911 Willy Hellpach published his 'Geopsyche' which has become since then a standard work on 'Meteorolo-biology', and has passed through many editions. Therein one finds an abundance of richly informative data. The following may serve as an example showing that the physical efficiency exhibits a maximum in high summer while at the same time the psychic performance decreases drastically. (All this on the basis of extensive research.) Here is empirically confirmed what Dr Ita Wegman described from a knowledge of the life processes.



*Psycho-physical performance during the year (N. Hemisphere)*

And yet in another, still more intimate sphere, the occurrences in the course of the year have significance. It is connected with the inner being of speech and gesture. If people live with the moods during the course of the year, the strivings of spring full of expectations, the primal power of summer, the melancholy of the autumn and the wintry hardening, they unite themselves with the great cosmic breath which carries the creative word. The speech of the cosmos is the basic element of all poetry. Before incarnation,

the soul lives in the rhythm of the stars. It brings with it an echo of this rhythm into earthly life, and finds it mirrored in the weaving of the course of the year. "Hence the experience of the different seasons plays such a powerful role in all developing poets. The child especially lives with his soul still outside the body and within the activity of the elemental world, and what he experiences thus unconsciously rises up later as the experience of speech from out of the interior of his organism." (*Albert Steffen, Goethes Geistgestalt*)

If, therefore, the experience of the seasons is dulled, the powers of speech and gesture of the human being must eventually be stunted. Breathing and heart beat become unrhythmical, and illness is the result. Today people journey over the earth in a manner unprecedented in human history. How many illnesses may well go back unrecognised to this impetuous way of travelling? In recent years and decades, disturbances of circulation, speech and rhythm have increased in frightening numbers. Such disturbances cannot rightly be relieved with medicaments. The connection with the speech of the great cosmos must be found again in a newer, sounder way. Then will the already all but intolerable pressure of our technological surrounding world be mitigated. Experience of the seasons can be a real and effective therapy.

The doctor recognises a long list of illnesses that are connected with the seasons. Illnesses of winter for example are diphtheria, scarlet fever, angina, meningitis. Illnesses of summer are dysentery, diarrhoea, typhoid fever, paratyphoid and poliomyelitis.

The knowledge of the connection of illnesses with the seasonal happenings can become more extensive by taking up a systematic research of the rhythms.

Dr Friedrich Husemann reported years ago in the 'Weleda News': "We know today that all people in our latitudes are profoundly influenced by the rhythm of the Sun's rays. The Danish teacher of the deaf and dumb, Malling-Hansen reported already in 1884 on the basis of numerous observations of his pupils, that the growth in height of the children did not take place uniformly in the course of the year, but in the autumn months is only small, from December to March rises suddenly up to double and then to the middle of August slowly rises further, in order in autumn and winter to pass over again into a flat curve. A winter rest in the bony system is spoken of. But not alone in the bony system, but in the whole organisation does a condition of rest rule more or less in winter. That the rhythm of growth observed in Copenhagen is really connected with the movement of the Sun, becomes obvious when we consider that in Australia where as everybody knows, it is winter when we have summer, the rhythm takes place precisely in reverse."



## THE EFFECTS OF THE STARS

It should be possible for astronomy to open the soul directly to the spiritual. It has, however, so completely limited itself to a study of phenomena that can only be grasped by the physical senses, as the effects of the stars that stream down from the universe, that frequently quite the opposite takes place - estrangement from the spiritual. Astrology has fallen into frightful decadence; a new 'Astrosophy' has it is true been established in Rudolf Steiner's work, but this has up to now hardly been worked through. Hence it is not easy to re-establish today a spiritual and up-to-date conscious relationship to the world of stars. It is especially difficult for our questions regarding the peculiarity of the southern hemisphere. But we will at least try to indicate some glimpses into the field of such a new Astrosophy.

Rudolf Steiner gives data of the effects of stars that may appear quite strange at first glance: Earthquakes and volcanic eruptions are connected with certain star constellations. (*GA 350 Lectures to Workmen, lecture of 2/6/1923* and *(GA 354 Forming of Earth and Moon, Causes of Volcanism, lecture of 18/9/1924)*).

Meteorological and climatic phenomena are released by the activities of stars. (*GA 354 Lectures to Workmen, lecture of 13/9/1924*).

The distribution of water and land on the Earth has a causal connection with the starry heavens. (*GA 350 Lectures to Workmen, lecture of 25/6/1923*).

Better known and more familiar still to modern people is everything connected with the Sun's course through the zodiac. Although satellites and space travel have at first given certain prominence to the materialistic comprehension of the cosmos, there still remains preserved in the depths of the soul a secret knowledge of the connection of the human being with the stars; this, however, can often manifest itself only in superstitions. Even into the darkness of these connections Anthroposophy has brought light. But the work yet to be performed is endless if the impulses of Rudolf Steiner are to be worked through. That holds especially true for the questions of the position of the southern hemisphere in the cosmos as a whole. We shall hint here at some of the most important facts.

Prof. Hermann Beckh must have been the first who in his book *'The Cosmic Rhythm in the Gospel of St Mark'* called attention to the ancient connection of 'sign' and 'opposite sign' in the zodiac. He finds for example, how in Aries and Libra, the human being is placed in the correct balance into the earthly forces. In Taurus and Scorpio, the forces of speech and reproduction stand opposite each other. Ordinary physiology knows this connection already - one need only think of the breaking of the voice in men at puberty. But in not too long a time, the forces of reproduction will even pass over to the 'Bull-organ': "The human being will proceed from the human being, man will speak forth man. And this in the future will be the birth of a new human being - that he is spoken forth by another." (*GA 99 Theosophy of the Rosicrucian, lecture of 5/6/1907*).

Gemini and Sagittarius bear a relationship to each other as bright midday to midnight. Midnight can spiritually-inwardly observe what illuminates the day outwardly, 'seeing the sun at midnight'. Cancer and Capricorn as solstice signs have a seesaw relationship. It is as if they speak to each other: You must increase - but I must decrease. (Not for nothing does one find in the Crab between the 'Two Asses' stars, the star cluster Praesepe (Crib). Capricorn is however, the sign of the John-Elijah being.).

Leo and Aquarius relate to each other as the whole man to his central organ, his heart. Virgo and Pisces form the great constellation of the Lord's Supper. In the miracles of feeding in the Gospels resounds the mystery of bread and fishes.

Hence it can be understood that also in the spring equinox on which the Mystery of Golgotha took place on Earth, the vernal point could already resound lightly in the opposite sign.

In his second star book 'The Cosmic Rhythm in the Gospel of St John', Prof. Beckh makes the following observation on the spring equinox in Aries; "That is said from the aspect of the northern hemisphere. In the southern hemisphere autumn begins then, that would then be for the north the opposite sign Libra. With each sign the opposite sign is active simultaneously - that has been brought out constantly in the description of the Gospel of St Mark, and in the southern hemisphere the emphasis of sign and opposite sign is reversed." (*Introduction, p.18*).

Star wisdom however is handed down almost exclusively for the northern hemisphere. Only quite fragmentary research data are in our possession of the star wisdom of the Incas - to mention an example. So little has been handed down of the mysteries of the southern hemisphere, that really the southern heavens must be conquered anew! But if one has once discovered rightly the key of the polarity one also learns to use it.

The northern pole of the ecliptic is surrounded by the Dragon. The dragon sagas arose from the experience in occult development that man consists not only of Bull-, Lion-, and Eagle-like parts, but that in the lower human lives a dragon, a savage serpent. "Many a one could resolve at the cost of immortality to be a Bull, a Lion or an Eagle. But that is only the upper human. The further continuation downwards is a savage dragon, a savage serpent." (*GA 137 Man in the Light of Occultism, Theosophy and Philosophy, lecture of 10/6/1912*).

At the southern pole of the ecliptic we find the ship Argo. In it a remarkable number of Greek heroes journeyed to capture the golden fleece in Colchis. Jason, their leader, could indeed fulfil the tasks set him, but King Aities did not hand over the golden fleece. So he could take possession of it only by cunning. By magic means Medea lulled the hundred-eyed dragon to sleep.

"The quest for the golden fleece was one of the probations of Egyptian initiations; and this has been preserved for us in the wonderful saga of the voyage of Jason and the

Argonauts. We have seen the development. When the form of the lower organs still resembled the boats of which we have spoken, the astral body in the water-earth still had a golden sheen. In the water-earth, man's astral body was permeated with golden light. The search for the astral body is portrayed in the voyage of the Argonauts. In a refined and subtle way, we must bring the quest for the golden fleece into connection with the Egyptian myth." (*GA 106 Egyptian Myths and Mysteries, lecture of 12/9/1908*).

If we raise the images into the imaginative sphere the connection is clear: The dragon - the boat (the ship) is the savage serpent in the lower human, the lower organs as boat.

In this way one may make his voyage of discovery in the starry heaven - and what does one find? There is polarity everywhere. One gains a deep feeling for the reason why the body of the Earth has two polar halves. In the northern hemisphere the forces of consciousness predominate. These disintegrate, consume etheric matter, because consciousness is only possible where life decays. In the southern hemisphere the upbuilding forces predominate. The large oceans are organs of regeneration; one could prove that right into the meteorological connections. But there are also continents in the southern hemisphere. They are islands of consciousness in the sea of the upbuilding formative forces.

A new Astrosophy will one day see man and his organs connected directly with the starry heavens, as Rudolf Steiner has pointed out in the so-called *Astronomical Course* (*GA 323*). If men are found in the southern hemisphere who have the courage independently to apply Anthroposophy as a tool, discoveries will be possible that up to now, it has only been possible to dream about. Thus one day a truly brotherly partnership of the hemispheres will develop. It will be proved that human souls too may 'pass each other golden buckets'.

## CONCLUSION

I am fully aware of the objections that can be raised against the view expressed in this work. I have myself for years passed through the weightiest of these objections on the search for the right solution of the 'problem of the seasons'. Therefore I also know that they are to be taken seriously. In most cases however, they are based on the fact that one has only a partial view in the field of vision, and therefore no longer sees the whole extent of the problem. Perhaps this work may be of assistance in acquiring a more comprehensive picture of the matter.

In closing this work I would like to go into two conceptions from which many such objections result.

Ever and again the opinion arises that over the whole Earth the festivals must be celebrated 'by all Christians conjointly'. From this opinion a decisive value is derived especially for the celebration of the Christmas festival. But Rudolf Steiner never said such a thing. The northern hemisphere is moreover in a situation that can tell us much about the validity of such a viewpoint. The situation in question is the Easter festival.

The calculation of the date does not result strictly from astronomical data, but according to the so-called 'cyclic' calculations. Already in early Christian times, in place of the astronomical calculations difficult for those times, a tabular-cyclic arrangement was set up so that in all parts of the Christian world at that time the date of Easter might be established sufficiently far in advance. That has established itself in the feelings, although the Easter festival should really be determined by the 'glance up to the heavens'. However it is not the intention to discuss now the reasons for and against a purely astronomical determination of the date of Easter. With the cyclic calculation, it happens that in some years the date of Easter so established deviates by about one or several weeks from the astronomical date. The matter is further complicated by the fact that for example the Eastern Churches have other methods of calculation, so that ever and again a 'correct' date of Easter was sought. On the other hand however, the point of view was formed that it might not be so important to arrive at the accurate date of Easter, but on what men do: that is, that by the joint celebration of the Easter festival a spiritual effect might be attained that might have such power that the correct astronomical date did not really matter any more. Frau L. Kolisko was asked to establish by the capillary-dynamolysis (Steigbil) method if perhaps at a festival which had been established by the cyclic method, and deviated from the astronomically determined Easter, a typical picture for Easter might yet result. The result was negative, i.e. the Easter picture was yielded only at the astronomically determined date and not at the date of the cyclically calculated and actually celebrated festival day. However it was rumoured with astounding tenacity that the typical Easter picture was shown also at the actually celebrated Easter date. That however was not the case, as a careful investigation showed.

From objective judgement of this matter, it may be clear that anything different cannot be expected. One must only seek to form a realistic idea of how many men actually celebrate the Easter festival out of a conscious connection with the Mystery of Golgotha. Can a spiritual activity proceed from a festival celebrated by habit? If today official representatives of Christian churches even reject the divinity of Christ, the Easter festival cannot be such a significant festival for all Christians.

What is here mentioned about the Easter festival can also be confidently applied to the Christmas festival. The world-wide grotesque commercialising of the Christmas festival is a sign of the loss of the true Holy Night.

We are at a turning point, especially in relation to a spiritual adoption of the conception of the festival thought. It is a question of the renewal of the festivals.

The other idea that can give occasion for objections is the one that the Earth, if the people of the southern hemisphere wished to celebrate their Christmas likewise in winter - in their winter, in June - will be 'cut into two parts'.

Nothing is more mistaken than this idea, for then one is compelled to reproach the creative powers with creating the Earth divided into poles. Attempts have been made to see in the arrangement of the continents and the seas a uniform 'countenance' of the Earth. Whatever may be discovered by that, one can never in that way explain away the fact of the polar division of our earth. It should be remembered that Rudolf Steiner has shown this polarity to exist right into the activity of the Rulers of the Seasons. If one looks at the festivals of the year in their connection with the natural seasons, one cannot evade the given formation of the Earth. The whole Earth must be seen dynamically. Thus what takes place on one side must 'be made whole' by what takes place on the other side.

The time has come to enter into a new dialogue with the Spirit of the Earth, in a way that befits our times.

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